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# VENICE

PART I, VOLUME I

# VENICE

BY

POMPEO MOLMENTI

Translated from the Italian by  
HORATIO F. BROWN, British  
Archivist and author of "In  
and Around Venice," etc.

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## *Part I*

VENICE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

2 volumes

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2 volumes (ready Spring of 1907)

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**G**ARMENTS of the Venetians of the XIV Century. From the Mosaic in the Chapel of St. Isidore in St. Mark's Cathedral

*(Coloured aquarelle by Professor S. Misinato)*

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# VENICE

ITS INDIVIDUAL GROWTH FROM THE  
EARLIEST BEGINNINGS TO THE  
FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

BY  
POMPEO MOLMENTI

TRANSLATED BY HORATIO F. BROWN

PART I — THE MIDDLE AGES  
VOLUME I

CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG & CO.

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1906

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# VENICE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

## INTRODUCTION — THE ORIGINS

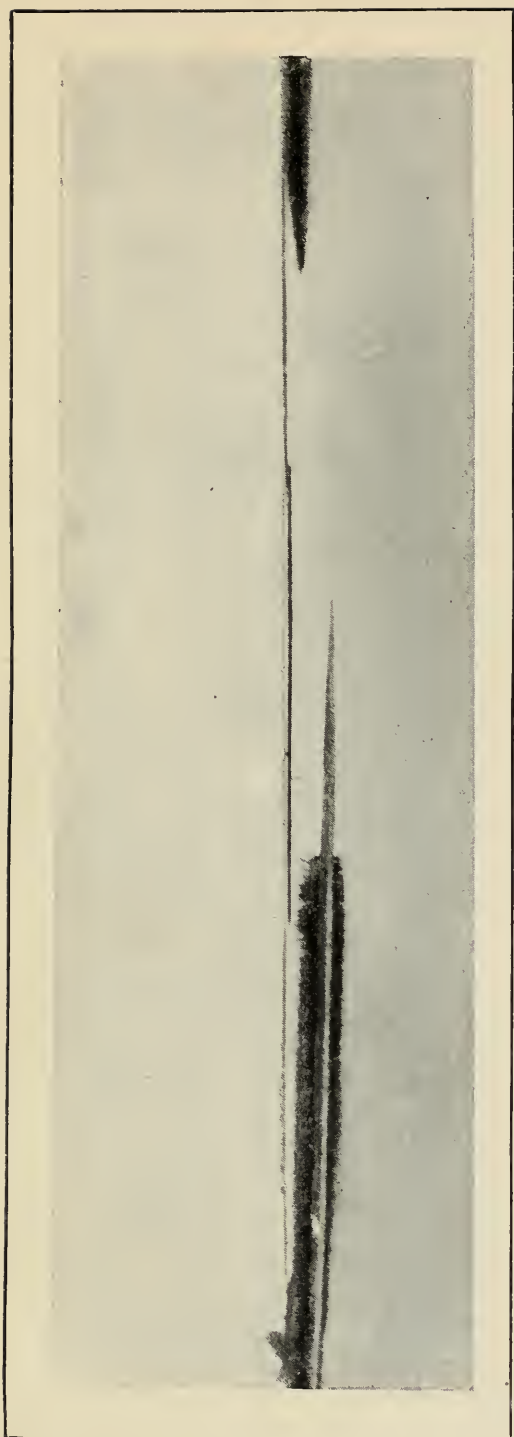
THE Veneti were among the most ancient peoples of Italy. The story of their arrival and settlement in the district which took its name from them, belongs in part to mythology. A vast forest, spreading from the mouths of the Po to the Tagliamento, was called after Phaethon, while tradition speaks of the voyages of Jason, Hercules, and Antenor, and preserves the myths of the oracular Geryon, — at whose command golden dice were thrown into the springs at Abano, — of Dædalus and Icarus at work on statues in the islands of the Electerides, of a nymph called Sola, who gave her name to Solana on the edge of the lake at Arquà. In the dawn of a nation's history the myths, which contain in themselves a psychological meaning indicative of the earliest consciousness in the race, have all a common source and an intimate resemblance.

Nor even when we reach historic times does the origin of the Veneti become clearer. The most ancient authors, both Greek and Latin, — Herodotus, Scylax, Strabo, Ptolemy, Livy, Virgil, Pliny, — when talking of events before the Roman era, only tell us that the Veneti belonged to the Illyrian race, that they preserved their independence, and were constantly torn by fierce struggles with Gauls, Insubres, and Etrurians. We have no other certain information on this point till modern research laid bare in the

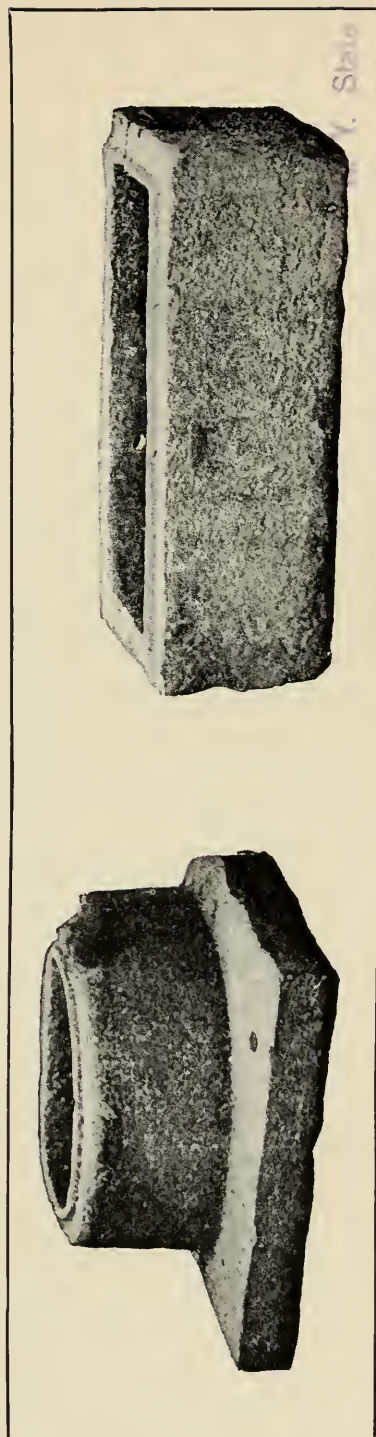
districts of Verona, Treviso, Este, Belluno, and Friuli, and in the valleys of the higher Alps, those monuments, tombs, vases, and other precious remains of art and history which serve to throw light on the life and the civilisation of the Venetian people during the period upon which written tradition is silent.

That region of Italy, bounded on the one side by the Adige, on the other washed by the northern sweep of the Adriatic, and protected by the Rhætian and Julian Alps, was, according to classical tradition, inhabited first by the Euganei and then by the Veneti. To the Euganei, perhaps, — certainly to an Aryan people antecedent to the Veneti, — belong the pile-dwellings found in the lakes of Fimon, Arquà, and Garda. They date from a period in which the inhabitants, though they preferred stone, still knew the use of bronze. Later on, about the time when the use of stone was abandoned and people began to employ bronze and even gradually iron, that is, about the eighth century B.C., the Veneti emigrated from Illyria and took up their permanent abode in the new country. There they found themselves brought into contact and trade-relations with Italic and Etruscan races, who successively inhabited the Bolognese territory, and with the Greeks, who, at Adria, held one of the most flourishing maritime emporiums of upper Italy; and thus the Veneti, little by little, from the seventh to the fifth century B.C., made progress in the arts and industries, and even learned from the Greeks the rudiments of writing. Italic industries and arts spread over Central Europe till at the beginning of the fourth century B.C. they suffered pernicious contact with the Gallic tribes which had invaded the valley of the Po. Under this influence the Veneti received and assimilated many elements of the Gallic civilisation, though they preserved intact





A VIEW NEAR VENICE



SEMICIRCULAR tomb in stone resting on a square base; and stone coffin of a babe. (Altino)



their sepulchral rites, their language, and, above all, their political independence.<sup>1</sup>

According to the plausible conjecture of certain scholars, based on discoveries in excavations, Este, the ancient Ateste, pleasantly placed on the slopes of the Euganean Hills, was the metropolis of the Veneto before the Roman era.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it was a flourishing city, and archæologists are able, thanks to the discovery of the necropolis at Este, vast in extent and rich in metal and earthenware utensils, to reconstruct to some extent the history of the early Veneti, and to evoke from their sepulchral monuments some conception of their ancient life.

The Veneti burned their dead, and the ashes, enclosed in urns, were laid at first in the bare earth, later on in square stone tombs. Even at that early date social differences were indicated in the tombs; some had rich and elegant, others but poor and mean fittings. The earthenware vases found in the sepulchres mark the gradual development and refinement of the ceramic art. More striking still is the advance in metal work. A bronze bucket (*situla*), now world-famous, brings before our eyes, by the scenes portrayed on it, the manners and customs of the ancient Veneti, their arms, utensils, tools, and ornaments, among which the delicate and graceful safety-pins take a high place, and teach us that, side by side with bronze, the primitive metal iron was gradually coming into use. All these objects, some of them of exquisite workmanship, constitute most precious documents for the story of ancient Italic art.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ghirardini, *I Veneti prima della storia*. A lecture delivered in the University of Padua, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Id., *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Id., *La situla italica primitiva studiata specialmente in Este* (in the *Mon. ant.* published by the *Accademia dei Lincei*. Roma, 1892, 1898, 1901).

## 4 VENICE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the year 215 B.C. the Veneti allied themselves to the Romans to fight their neighbours the Gauls, and in 183 they voluntarily made submission to the mighty empire of Rome, accepting its religion, law, culture, and language. Under Roman dominion the Venetian territory formed, with Gallia Cisalpina, a single province. Ancient writers draw a pleasant picture of the great cities, the fruitful soil, the riches of Venetia, which was both an ornament and a source of strength to the capital. Even in the days of the decline Venetia and Insubria were able to bear heavy taxation, thanks to their commerce and their sea trade. The great country houses, the broad consular roads, such as the Via Æmilia, the salubrity of the air, the amenity of the villages, all rendered these provinces worthy to rival the famous shores of Baiæ: *Æmula Bajanis Altini litora villis*.<sup>1</sup> In the towns the people were full of vigorous life; imperial palaces rose at Altino, Aquileia, and Verona; there was a public mint at Aquileia,<sup>2</sup> and a manufactory of arms at Concordia, whose necropolis, discovered in 1873, shows us stone urns adorned with inscriptions and decorations; everywhere stood flourishing towns and villages.

Nevertheless the antique severity of manners did not change, and Pliny assures us that this people always preserved its modesty and ancestral frugality. The women were chaste, soberly dressed, and without insolent pride, — a fact that, as Filiasi justly observes, allows us to measure the character of the society; for women do not become light unless the men have first grown dissolute.

<sup>1</sup> Martial, Lib. IV, Ep. XXV. Cfr. Pavanello, *La Città d'Altino e l'Agro Altinate orientale*, Cap. I. Treviso, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> Filiasi, *Memorie storiche dei Veneti primi e secondi*, T. I. Padova, tip. del Seminario, MDCCCXI.



The inclinations and affections of these people were guided by the serenity of their minds. Family life was submitted to the governance of the State, even in the choice of a wife; for, following a usage of the older Illyrian Veneti, which Herodotus records for us, every year on a certain day the virgins were gathered together, and, in the presence of the public officials, each youth selected his companion. Of course the beauties were chosen first, but a wise law provided that the man who carried off one of the fair should pay a certain sum of money to help to dower the less fortunate or the deformed, for whom a husband would thus be secured.<sup>1</sup> Traces of this custom are to be found among the later Venetians.

Before and during the Roman era, in which they adopted the toga, the Veneti were quietly dressed, and never became infected with the corruption, effeminacy, and luxury of the Etruscan colonies in the neighbouring territories, nor were they acquainted with silk, linen, gauze, or other precious stuffs. The *bardo cucullus*, a rough cape, was worn not only by the poorer country folk, but also by the well-to-do; it is mentioned in Juvenal.<sup>2</sup> Like the other Italians, their neighbours, they used blue serge, blue being a colour they always loved to such an extent that among the Romans "blue" and "Veneto" were synonymous, and at Rome the blue faction in the circus was called the Venetian faction.<sup>3</sup> They wore baggy breeches, on their heads a Phrygian cap, and round their necks a chain of gold or some other metal. In the field they used a shield and a large curved sword.

<sup>1</sup> Pignoria, *op. cit.*, Cap. XI.

<sup>2</sup> *Contentusque illic Veneto duroque cucullo.* Sat. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Filiassi, *op. cit.*, T. VI, p. 67.

## 6 VENICE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

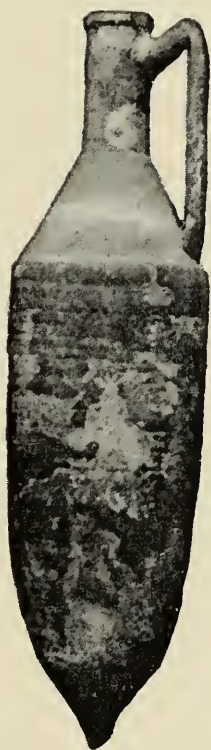
But if their manners were simple they did not neglect their personal cleanliness, and at Rome a certain composition of vitriol for cleansing the skin, called *terra Veneta*, was much appreciated. When the Veneti became Romans they naturally felt the influence of the capital, though they did not abandon the simplicity of their manners. For example, they adopted several of the Roman games most in vogue, and combats of men and beasts and of gladiators took place in the amphitheatres of Altino, Aquileia, Padua, and Verona. But bloody spectacles were repugnant to the gentle character of the people, who took greater pleasure in chariot and horse races, — the horses they bred with great care, — in scenic representations, and in the so-called *iselastici* games, or gymnastic sports, followed by challenges to poetry and song.

Throughout this period of the empire we meet with an alternation of fortunate and unfortunate events, among the latter the siege of Aquileia in 238 by Maximinus, the rival of the two emperors, Maximus and Balbino, elected by the Senate. Aquileia offered a stout resistance, not to be cowed by dread of famine or of death. Acts of valour were common. As bowstrings ran short the women offered their own hair, and therefore, after the death of Maximinus and the end of the siege, a medal was struck to commemorate the abnegation of the people of Aquileia. It bore on the obverse the figure of Quintia Crispilla, wife of Maximus, and on the reverse a temple with the legend *Venere calva*.

The fifth century is marked by slaughter. After the awful but temporary invasions of the Vandals and the Huns — “the scourges of God” — there came the more permanent occupations by the Eruli, the Ostrogoths, who were less barbarous, and finally the Lombards,



(A)



(B)



(C)

A AMPULLA and ointment box of thick glass; cinerary urn of violet glass. B and C—Amphoræ from Altino





very fierce at first, but gradually tamed by the gentleness of the climate and by intermarriage with the conquered Italians.

The empire collapsed at the shock of the barbarians; the stormy incursions of those northern peoples, ill satisfied with their poverty-stricken country, set all Italy in a blaze, and she became the theatre of appalling and incessant carnage. During this miserable and cowardly period, the larger part of Italian vitality withdrew to the extreme and neglected corners of the peninsula. The glorious heritage of the Italians was preserved by some few fugitives who, thanks to the fruitful operation of their united efforts, gave birth, among the marshes of the Adriatic coast, to a State whose history is full of varied episodes, some felicitous, some disastrous, almost all glorious.

Let us now observe in some detail the localities in the Venetian estuary where national freedom took refuge from the barbarian inroads, and what were the elements which went to make up the new people. Our guides shall be the *Cronaca Altinate*,<sup>1</sup> the *Chronicon Gradense*, the *Chronicles of John the Deacon*, and of the Doge, *Andrea Dandolo*.<sup>2</sup>

Venetian chroniclers, in the spirit of their time, not only attached the origin of Venice to the legend of Troy and Æneas, from whom they derived the name *Eneti* or *Veneti*,<sup>3</sup> but they further desired to surround

<sup>1</sup> *Cronaca Altinate*, ed. Simonsfeld. (*Mon. Germ. Hist.*, Vol. XIV. Hannover, 1883.) *Cronache veneziane antichissime*, edited by G. Monticolo. (*Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, Vol. IX. Roma, 1900.) The *Chronicon Gradense* at pages 17 et seq.; The *Chronicon Venetum* by Giovanni Diacono at pages 57 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *Chronicon* (*Rer. Ital. Script.*, Vol. XII).

<sup>3</sup> The *Cronaca Altinate* (p. 33) says, "Tote iste . . . civitates (Adria, Aquileia, Concordia, Padua, Mantua, Verona, Oderzo, Altino, etc.)

the early dwelling-place of their fathers with a halo of religious and poetical glory, and the *Cronaca Altinate* records the legend of supernatural voices indicating to the refugees the sure asylum of the lagoon. Legend, too, evokes from the silence of the vast Venetian estuary the figure of the saint who was one day to be the patron of Venice, and tells us how Saint Mark, journeying from Aquileia to Ravenna, touched at the island group of Rialto, where in a dream an angel appeared unto him and greeted him with the words, *Pax tibi, Marce, hic requiescet corpus tuum*, and in tones prophetic foretold to him the birth of a great city on those barren islets.

Those islets, however, must certainly have been known and inhabited long before that. From remotest times the *lidi* between Grado and the mouths of the Po, clothed with evergreen pine forests, were occupied to some extent, for along that shore lay the shortest and the safest route between Ravenna and Aquileia. This would lead us to conjecture the presence of posting stations well provided with all that was required for the journey.<sup>1</sup> If the waters of Grado were a permanent station for the Roman fleet, and the actual port of Aquileia; if, again, Albiola and Malamocco and Fossa Clodia were the ports of Padua which extended its jurisdiction from Oriago to Chioggia<sup>2</sup>; if the people of Altino itself made use of the ports of Lido, Treporti, and Sant' Erasmo, as we must believe, we are forced to the conclusion that all these places were already known

edificaverunt ipsi Troiani, que cum Enea illorum princeps, quos antea gentiles fuerunt venientes de illa antiqua magne Troie; que modo ab Enea nomine Andreaticis Enetici nuncupantur."

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, *Corpus Inscr. Lat.*, Vol. I, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> Gloria, *Cod. dipl. padovano* (sæcs. VII-XII) *Diss.*, p. xxii.

and inhabited by sailor-folk and fishermen, who, however, owing to their scanty numbers, were unable to form an independent political association and recognised the jurisdiction of the mainland.

Behind the outer *lidi*, long strips of land, protected on the one side from encroaching tides, on the other separated from the mainland by broad swamps, thrust themselves into the upper estuary from the Tagliamento to the mouths of the Piave, and there, in all probability, from fabulous times, was bred that race of Venetian horses allied to the Arab and famous in the circus at Rome, and also those herds of oxen which soon after gave their name to one of the *lidi*. Who can suppose that the islands of Torcello and Burano, lying in front of Altino, were unknown? Are not Latin inscriptions unearthed there, referring to the public gardens belonging to the Altinati? Nor can that little group of islands which lies between Torcello, the present city of Venice, and the *lido* have been quite devoid of any cultivation until the barbarian invasions, though the Cronaca Altinate calls them deserted. At Majurbio (Mazzorbo) there was a celebrated and much frequented shrine to the god Belenus. What the Rialto group was like we shall see later on; we may limit ourselves to stating that in front of the harbour, subsequently called the *porto di Veniesia*, on the point of Olivolo, from Trojan times there stood a castle, a sure indication both of population and of maritime movement and trade. The islands of the lower or southern estuary were less flourishing. Parallel with the line of terra firma ran long stretches of land, at first, without doubt, inhabited, whereon rose small villages, quickly obliterated by the changing courses of the rivers.



Such was the Venetian estuary. Let us look now at the new inhabitants. Ancient writers tell us that in 452, on the approach of the Huns, Secundus, Archbishop of Aquileia, bearing with him the treasury of his church, took refuge in the island of Grado, and that when the incursion had passed by, Nicetas, Secundus' successor, returned with the fugitives to ruined Aquileia. In face of the new invasion by the Goths in 480, the Archbishop Marcellinus, accompanied by many people of Aquileia, again took refuge in Grado, which, after the further invasion of the Lombards in 568, offered once more an asylum to Archbishop Paulinus, and was eventually chosen by his successor, the Patriarch Elias, as the permanent residence of the Metropolitan, who had under him six other sees of the lagoon cities.<sup>1</sup> Grado was called the second Aquileia, and became in a short space of time the richest and most opulent among the islands of the estuary,<sup>2</sup> and yet it never attained political importance, perhaps because it was the seat of the ecclesiastical power.

The fugitives from Concordia sought asylum in the island which took its name — Caprule and then Caorle — from the goats brought there by the goatherds. At Caorle one still finds in the nomenclature traces of ancient families which have disappeared elsewhere. These people gave themselves to agriculture and to the breeding of herds, and slowly consolidated all the land that lies about the mouths of the Livenza. If we are to believe the Cronaca Altinate, the new inhabitants of Caprule even thus early undertook to regulate the waterways, in addition to the foundation of agricultural settlements and the normal occupations of fishing and shooting. Bibione, lying between Grado and Caorle,

<sup>1</sup> *Cr. Altinate*

<sup>2</sup> Caprin, *Lagune di Grado*. Trieste, 1890.



(A)



(B)



(C)

A — MONUMENTS and fragments in the museum at Aquileia. B — A small sepulchral monument from Altino (Museo di Treviso). C — Sepulchral shrine from Altino





was united with the mainland, and, as Zanetti remarks in his notes to John the Deacon, is not to be confounded with the distant Torre delle Bebbe beyond Chioggia.

On the banks of the lower Piave, near the canals called Ramo and Grassaga, the city of Heraclea, so called in honour of the Emperor Heraclius, was peopled by the upper classes from the city of Opitergium, who fled before the ruin wrought by the Lombard Rotari. Heraclea was noted for its temples, its great buildings, and because it became the seat of the first Doge of the lagoon confederation.<sup>1</sup> Seven miles away, and not far from the mouths of the Piave, was a town called Equilio, from the horses that were bred there along with herds of cattle and droves of pigs. Later on it took the name of Jesolo, and its inhabitants, who perhaps had come down from the hills of the Veneto, were a race at once proud and indomitable. Probably this was the sole cause of their quarrel, carried on for nearly ninety years, with Heraclea, where the remnants of the ancient Veneto-Roman aristocracy had concentrated itself and made its influence felt.

The islets of Torcello gave asylum, during Attila's invasion in 452, to the inhabitants of Altino, who, in the fourth century, had been converted to Christianity by the Bishop Saint Heliodorus. As the danger died away, many returned to their native place; but in the seventh century Torcello again received an immigration from Altino when the Arian persecution was raging. To Torcello the Bishops Paulus and Maurus removed their

<sup>1</sup> Among the cane-brakes of the marshy land, about seven kilometres from the village of Ceggia, have been found Roman bricks, pieces of mosaic, fragments of balustrades and jars, all that remains of Heraclea. The town was destroyed in 805 and rebuilt by the Doge Agnello Partecipazio under the name of Cittanova. It was the see of a bishop, but quickly declined and disappeared.

see, and there rose churches and buildings, constructed to a large extent from stones and marble brought from Altino, which, however, was not entirely deserted, and down to the ninth century preserved a certain importance.<sup>1</sup>

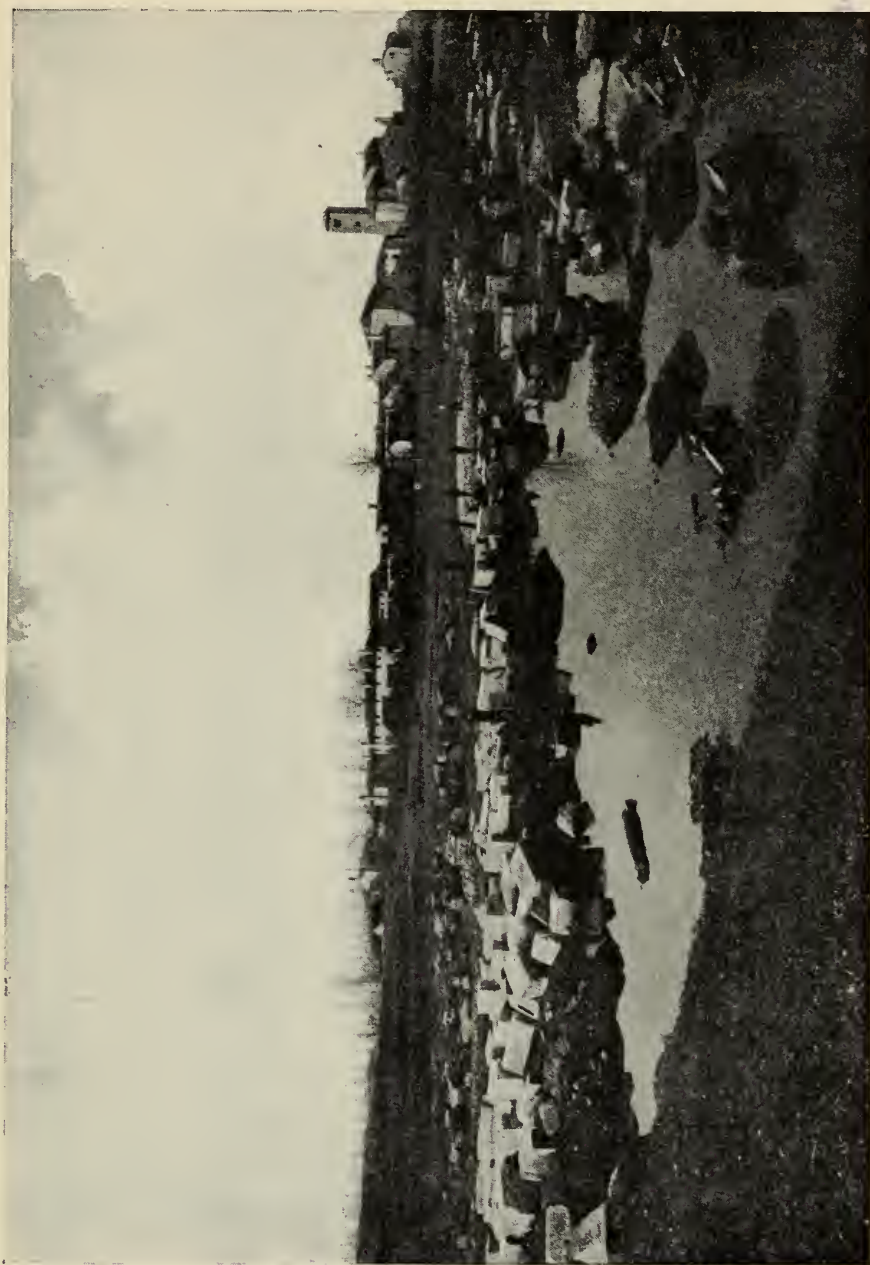
The people of Altino occupied Amuriana also, and the town soon became rich and populous. Nor were Majurbio and its neighbouring *lidi* less flourishing. In the fifteenth century the remains of splendid ancient basilicas were still visible.

At Malamocco we find a different race and different manners. The old town lay about a mile from the present village and was surrounded by a flourishing cultivation. The commerce of Padua was concentrated there and thither went the Bishop of Padua and a large number of Paduans when the Huns laid waste by fire and sword that ancient and famous city of the Veneto. We shall presently see the reasons which led to Malamocco being chosen as the seat of the Doge; meantime we must note that the population could never forget that they drew their origin from Padua, one of the most illustrious cities of the mainland; and therefore it was unlikely that they would submit for long to the domination of the fugitives from Aquileia. Here then are to be found the first roots of those bloody conflicts which mark the early centuries of the Republic and which came to an end only when the great political idea of founding a capital in the middle of the estuary, and concentrating there the whole population, in spite of their various blood, character, and temper, was carried into effect.

After passing the port of Albiola there lay, facing each other and prosperous on account of their salt

<sup>1</sup> Cipolla, *Ricerche sulle trad. intorno alle antiche immigrazioni nella laguna* (*Archivio Veneto*, T. XXVIII, p. 330 and *passim*).





Livingston Library

THE NECROPOLIS OR SEPULCRETUM AT CONCORDIA



pans, the greater and lesser Chioggia, a name probably derived from the *Fossa Clodia* of the Romans.

In the heart of the lagoons rose the smallest but the safest of all the islands, Rivoalto. The extremity of the lagoon opposite to that where stood Grado was closed by Capo d'Argine.

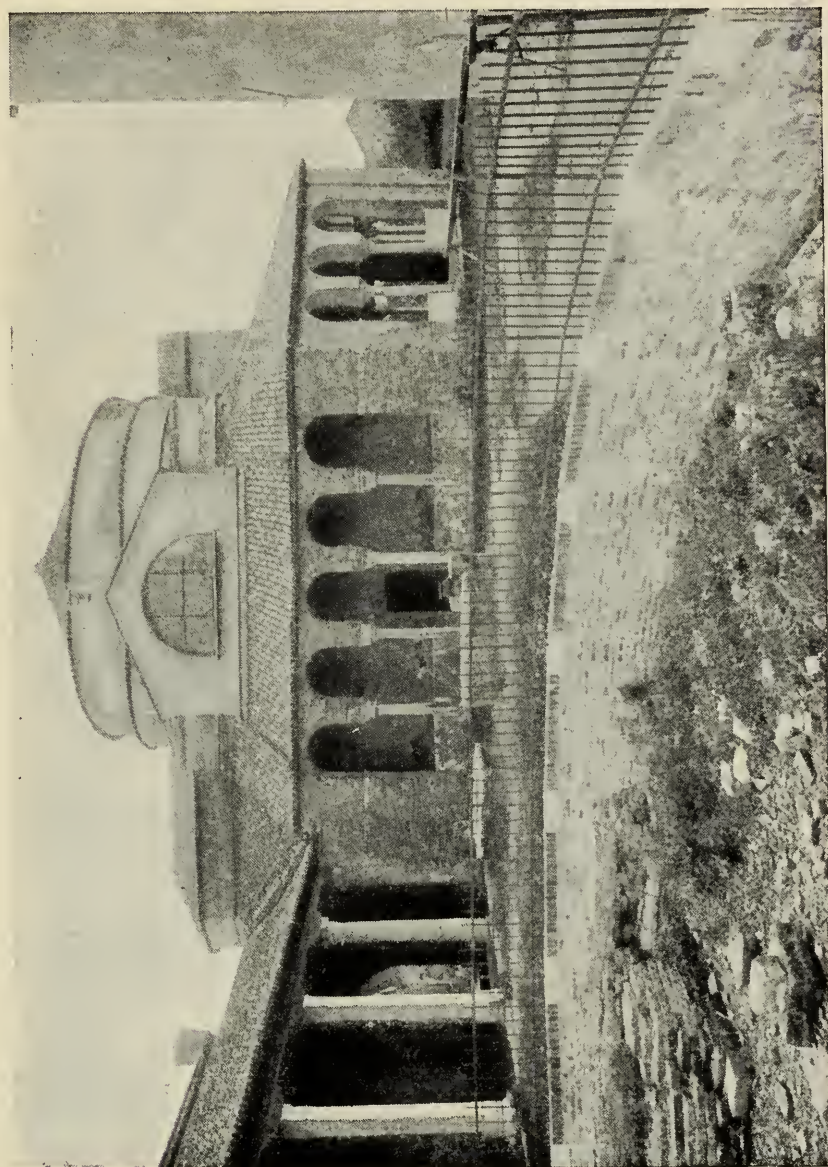
The incessant operations of sea and rivers have modified the aspect and even the position of the islands; political commotions have destroyed some towns, while others have suffered change through the progress of time and the cataclysms of nature, and nothing of their ancient splendour now remains save the name. To-day, among the desolate lagoons of Grado, of Caorle, of Altino, of Jesolo, of Torcello, of Malamocco, one dreams of the life at a period which was flourishing in trade and industries, when the workmen swarmed in the factories, and Greek masters of mosaic laid the pavements of churches and public buildings whose magnificence we cannot reconstruct for ourselves save by the aid of scattered and formless ruins.

With Romulus Augustulus the majesty of imperial Rome disappeared entirely, and mainland Venice, like the rest of Italy, fell under the sway of Odoacer and then of Theodoric (493), until Justinian (553-555) reconquered the peninsula from the Goths. Lagoon Venice, if, as some hold, it retained its autonomy while at the same time recognising the overlordship of the Goths, most certainly admitted the suzerainty of the Byzantine Empire, and in due course the superiority of the other masters of the neighbouring mainland. When the Eastern emperors moved against the Goths, and the peninsula became a battlefield with all the horrors of famine and death, Cassiodorus, the minister of Theodoric, King of the Goths, wrote to the

*Tribuni Marittimi* of the Venetian lagoons begging them *with their large fleet of boats* to carry provisions from Istria to Ravenna. This famous letter of Cassiodorus, written in a style of artificial elegance, shows us the dawn of Venetian sea-power. It describes the whole population, various in condition, in habits, in age, but united together in one common activity. This people, which rose into being during the ruin of Italy, could hardly as yet take a first step towards amalgamation, but, renewed and strengthened by suffering, it emerged from its early difficulties and affirmed itself as a nation with a vigour and resolution which presaged for it a long and sure existence. With them lay the future and its power. The letter of Cassiodorus, though it has often been reproduced, is a document of such importance for the history of Venetian life and manners in the sixth century, one hundred years after the invasion of Attila, that we must quote it here, since records of that period are so rare.

“ You,” writes Cassiodorus to the Tribunes, “ own many and many a ship; your vessels fear not the stormy winds. They come home safely to port, nor do they ever founder, they who time after time set sail from shore. The famous Venetia, already rich in nobility, touches, to the south, Ravenna and the Po; to the east it enjoys the smiling shores of the Ionian Sea, where the alternate ebb and flow cover and uncover the face of the land. There lie your houses, like water-fowl, now on land, now on islands; and when the change comes, they are seen scattered like the Cyclades over the face of the waters — habitations not made by nature, but founded by the industry of man. For the land is made solid by wattled piles, nor do you dread to offer so fragile a bulwark to the waves of the sea when





Remains of the Ancient Baptistry at Torcello

REMAINS OF THE ANCIENT BAPTISTRY AT TORCELLO (VII CENTURY)





the low-lying islands fail to beat back the weight of water because they are not high enough. Fish alone is abundant; rich and poor live there on equal terms. A single food nourishes all alike; the same sort of house shelters you all; you envy not the lot of others, and living thus you flee the vice that rules the world. All your rivalry is expended in your salt-works; in place of ploughs and sickles you turn your drying-pans, and hence comes all your gain, and what you have made is your very own. All products are dependent on your industry; for it may well be that some seek not gold, but there lives not a man who does not need salt, which seasons all our food."

The refugees of the Adriatic lagoons, who by long years of toil, rich in noble deeds, were slowly building up the new fatherland, were men of various conditions, — *homeni degni et illustri*,<sup>1</sup> poor dependents, patrician, plebeian, — but all bound by the common tie of misfortune. A learned foreigner<sup>2</sup> declares that the rich and noble from the Italian mainland, subjects of the effete Roman Empire, cannot have sought asylum in the islands in any great numbers, for at the moment when Venice emerges we are brought face to face with a band of seafarers, vigorous, flourishing, indefatigable, who show no traces of a corrupt and decadent civilisation. It is probable that the more courageous among the citizens of the mainland towns did not fly at the first appearance of the barbarian hordes; nor did they abandon their country in its supreme need, as is proved by the long siege of Aquileia and the brave resistance of other mainland towns. On the other hand, it is likely that

<sup>1</sup> Sanudo, *Cronachetta*. Venezia, 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Gfrörer, *Storia di Venezia dalla sua fondazione fino all' anno 1084*. Venezia, 1878.

the aged, the women, and the children — all who were unfit to fight — sought safety in flight, while the rich and noble, who besides their lives had also their property to save, would, in all probability, make for the sure asylum of the estuary sooner than the poor, who, even in moments of greatest danger, are always bound to stay behind and wait what the fates may bring them, be it good or bad.<sup>1</sup> The dangers they ran, the loss of wealth, the perpetual struggle with an inhospitable soil and with robbers no less hostile, the necessity for a life of hardship and fatigue in which the weak must have disappeared, the continual use of arms, and the handling of ships, all contributed to build up the virile power of the new race. For the rest, the manners and customs of the Veneti, even the rich and noble, had not felt the action and the consequences of later-day corruption, and we may be sure that the asylum islands of the lagoon were not without some admixture of the patriciate which had fled from the mainland towns. We may conclude that after the first invasions many families returned to their homes, where lay their ancestral possessions<sup>2</sup>; but when the Goths first and then the Lombards enforced their grip on Italy, with all the suffering which history records, then the temporary asylum became the new and permanent home.

The *Cronaca Altinate* records the names of many powerful families gathered in the islands, who later on removed from Heraclea, Jesolo, Torcello, Mazzorbo, Burano, Ammiana, and Costanziaca to Venice. The chronicle recalls the wise and benevolent Partecipazi; the

<sup>1</sup> Giannotti, *Della rep. e magistrati di Venezia*, p. 283. Venezia, 1840.

<sup>2</sup> "His sedatis invasionibus plurimi profugorum ad primiora domicilia redierunt." Dandolo, *Chr.*, L. V, Cap. X.

Candiani, fierce in war and strong in body; the rich Barbolani, from Parma; the powerful Centranici; the gentle Selvo, from Bergamo; the Mastalici, from Reggio, who sought to combat ignorance and lying by building churches; the petulant Magi; the robust Mauroceni, from Mantua; the mild Grausoni, from Garda; the good Falier, from Fano; the magnificent Caloprini, from Cremona; the Moncanici, with their great train of servants; the mocking and incredulous Vallaresso, but church-builders all the same; Contarini, from Concordia, wise in counsel and kindly; the Barbarigo, learned in architecture; the Saponari, of Salona, builders of many houses; the Pintori, painters, as their name implies; the Sapini, given to agriculture; the Villiarenì Mastalici, who had brought with them vast sums of gold and silver; and many another. Now, who were all these? They had not grown up from humble and unknown families among the natives, but came from many different cities, bringing with them the prestige of riches and of noble lineage. Who were those *maiores* recorded by the chroniclers as forming the earliest of the ancient assemblies? Beyond a doubt they were the leading families, who with the lapse of time became the patricians or patrons, the seed of the Venetian aristocracy, gathered together in lagoons, along with their clients, from whom descended the Venetian people properly so called.

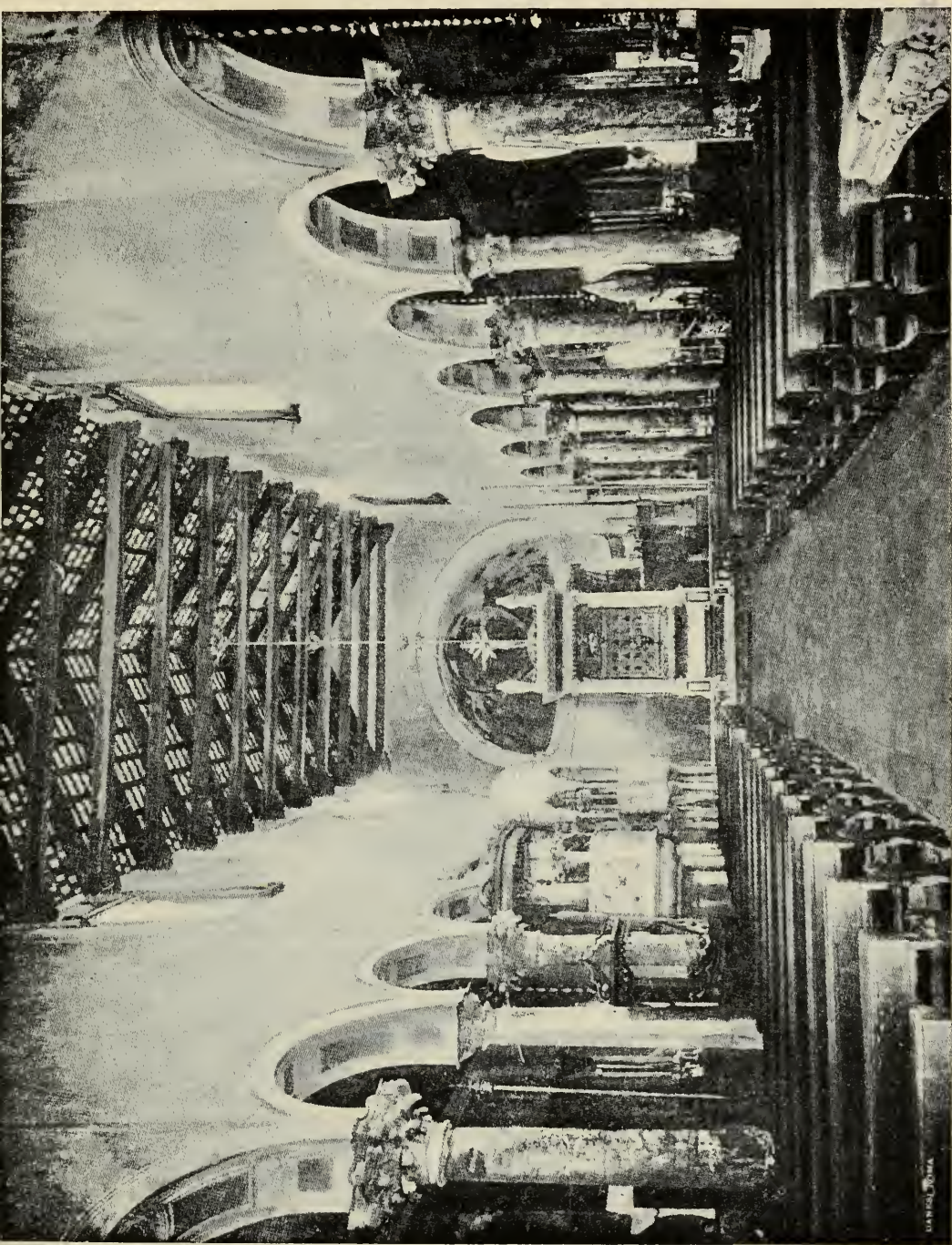
In Cassiodorus' letter we see the primitive, frugal, laborious early life of the Venetians entirely devoted to trade and the adornment of their new home. The details of this early life escape us. We can only follow in general lines the active industry which rendered the islands fit for habitation. "You," says Cassiodorus, "with your salt-pans sweat out coin," and in truth from the very



beginning the neighbouring provinces were tributary to the Venetians for salt, and connected with salt was an extensive trade in salt fish. Bread and salt they bartered for iron from Carinthia, to be used by themselves and also for export to the East. The activity was divided : some of the inhabitants dedicated themselves to agriculture and reduced the land to gardens and fields ; others selected the water for fishing or for salt-works. Besides the larger islands, every mound or hummock of sand brought down by the swirls of the Brenta, Sile, and Piave, every little islet surrounded by swamps or by narrow and tortuous canals, was rendered habitable. Thus the barren soil became the property of the newcomers, each island was a separate centre, a settlement as it were, with its own government and its own magistrates, until the moment came for it to form a part of the great Venetian community.

And so, while around the castles of Tuscany and on the plain of Lombardy the people lived in abject despair, while in Rome, fallen under the sword of the barbarian, patrician and plebeian alike suffered in servitude, the young community laid down its first regulations, its ships began to sail the Adriatic, its arms were called on to assist other races, its travellers pushed onward to the shores of the Orient. A strong people arose on the ruins wrought by the barbarians, the ancient civilisation came to life again and penetrated the institutions and customs of the new.

It is not our purpose to follow the course of events which drove the commune of Venice into wars with the neighbouring conquerors, and finally with Pipin, the most important of them all, as being the immediate cause of the final and definite selection of Rivoalto, — the germ and heart of Venice, — as the seat of the



INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL AT GRADO (VI CENTURY)





government. Still anyone who undertakes to inquire into the nature of lagoon life at that time cannot escape the necessity of investigating the causes of this event, and of noting the effect on the ideas which moulded the relations of the citizens towards each other and towards the State.

The existence of opposing factions in the islands of the lagoons had its origin in and was maintained by various causes. Part of the fugitives took refuge in lands which were already subject to their own municipal government, and therefore those fugitives may be said, as it were, to have found themselves at home. Others, and not a few, came to occupy land to which their ancestors had never put forward any claim. Thus the lower estuary, from the islands of Rialto to Capo d'Argine, was so fully populated that even as early as 421, according to Dandolo and other chroniclers, the city of Padua sent two consuls to govern it. But neither the Cronaca Altinate nor John the Deacon make any mention of these consuls; and we believe this tradition, which has no other authority than a document in the Archives of Padua,<sup>1</sup> is to be attributed to local rivalries; nevertheless we do not wish to assert that it does not contain some element of truth, namely, some traces of a genuine bond of dependence which, prior to the barbarian invasions, attached the men of the lower lagoon to the *Municipium* of Padua. In like manner the islands of Torcello and the group known as the Contrade, Murano,

<sup>1</sup> In a copy of this document which existed in the Stefani collection, now dispersed, and which dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century, the names of these consuls differ from those given by Sanudo in the *Vite dei Dogi*. The numbers also which are assigned to the various constellations, and the position of some of the planets, present notable differences. We reproduce the document in the appendix (Document A), not for its value, on which history has already passed judgment, but as a curiosity.

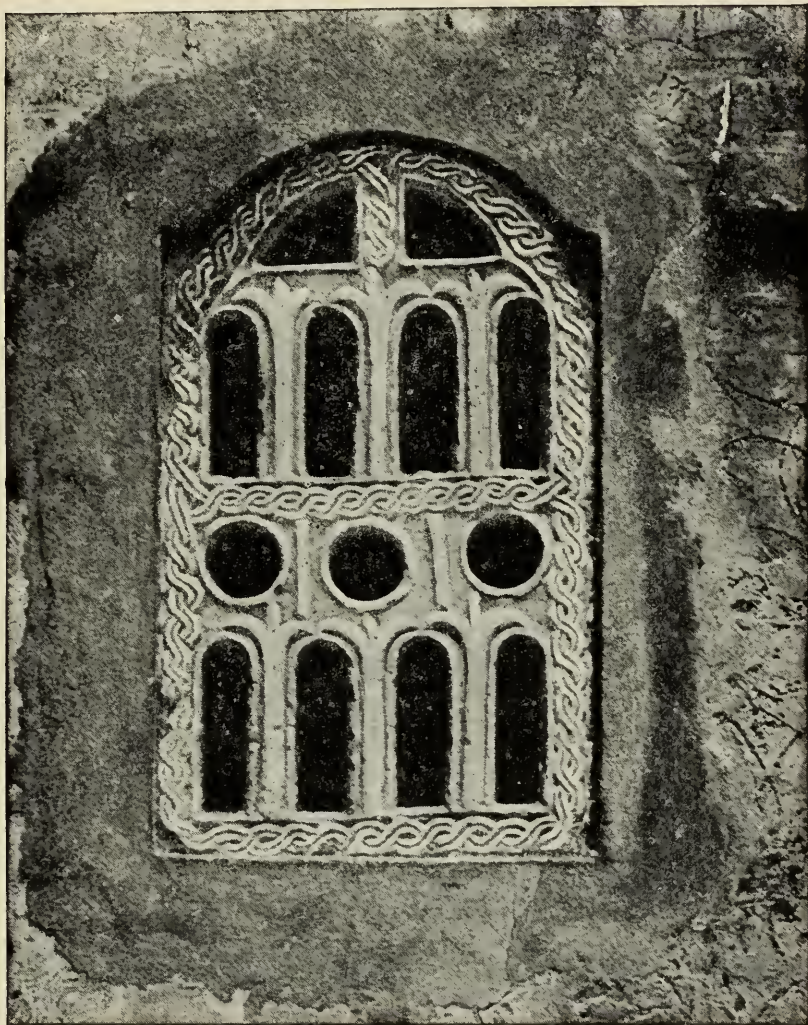
and the *lido* of Sant' Erasmo were probably attached to Altino, while the territories of Equilio and Heraclea, perhaps, were in a like dependence on Concordia, as beyond all doubt Grado formed part of the jurisdiction of Aquileia. At that period the common misfortunes can have left little leisure for discussing individual rights, but on the passing of the barbaric tempest, local jealousies and contests would inevitably come to life again. These considerations serve to throw some light on the struggles between Jesolo and Heraclea — struggles which often dyed the Canal dell' Arco the colour of blood — and also on the events which led to the removal of the ducal seat from Heraclea to Malamocco. They were struggles of conflicting elements fighting for supremacy — struggles, for example, of the people who came from Altino against the insolence of those who drew their origin from Aquileia ; or of the original citizens of Padua, who could endure no other superior. Add to this that, after the restoration of the Western Empire, difficulties and struggles must have multiplied for the Venetians who dwelt on the confines of Italy.

Early Venetians, for political reasons easily divined, desired to maintain that Venice was born free and preserved her freedom intact ; but as a matter of fact such complete independence was not in the spirit of the age, and no Latin race would ever have dreamed of refusing to acknowledge, at least in outward form, its obligations towards the Roman Empire and, later, towards the Greek.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the heading of documents — *regnantibus dominis nostris*, etc. Moreover, prayers were offered in the churches for the health of the Emperor, who frequently negotiated and concluded treaties in the name of Venice. Gfrörer, however, exaggerates the dependence of Venice on the sovereign of Constantinople, who, according to him, even had the right to confirm



A. Y. S. 111



BYZANTINE window let into the wall of a house at S. Tomà, Venice (VII century).  
Property of Comm. Guggenheim



On the other hand commercial interests influenced the new republic to remain united to Byzantium; with the decline of Byzantium, however, these bonds became relaxed. In the internal discords of the Venetian islands the Greeks took now one side now another, while the weaker party was wont to look for support from the lords of the neighbouring mainland, first the Lombards and then the Franks, and it is by no means improbable that many Venetian families still retained on the mainland a part at least of their ancient patrimony. We cannot believe that these families voluntarily abandoned the entire heritage of their forefathers; on the contrary, that heritage was maintained even throughout the barbarian invasions by a considerable number of Veneto-Romans, original owners of the soil, a fact which is demonstrated by the documents of the *Codex Diplomaticus Padavinus*.

We are therefore bound to distinguish two parties, the Veneto-Grecians and the Veneto-Italians; both were reinforced, as time went on, by the immigration of distinguished families of Greek origin, like the *Partecipazi*, or of Lombard origin, like the *Candiani*. The conflicts between the two parties led up to the invasion by the Frankish king, Pipin, whose career is said to have been checked by the rout at Malamocco and by the honourable peace which introduced a new and better disposition of the State. In the transference of the ducal seat to the islands of Rialto, we not only see the necessity for choosing a more central and secure abode, but also the desire to collect and fuse in one single spot, hitherto of minor importance, the best of the discordant elements

the election of the Doge. It is true, however, that the Doge frequently received titles of honour, such as *hypatos*, *spatharius*, and *protospatharius*, from the Byzantine court.

scattered about the estuary. On the other hand change of place implied change of constitution. If Heraclea had represented the supremacy of the Greek faction, and Malamocco the tendency towards the Franks, Rialto embodied the idea of national independence. The Doge Agnello Partecipazio, who in 814, in face of the supreme danger to the country, removed the seat of government to Rialto, gave life and form to the new State.

From this date begins the glorious history of Venice.



## CHAPTER I

### THE ASPECT AND FORM OF THE CITY

A SURE guide through the tortuous ways of the new city is wanting, and we are obliged to content ourselves with following the *Pianta di Venezia* edited by Temanza, attributed to the middle of the twelfth century, but certainly copied later than that, as buildings are represented in it which could not then have existed. To eke out our description we shall have recourse to documents and traditions.

We have seen how the fugitives from the barbarian invasions raised ramparts against the waves and by their industry transformed a marshy land into solid ground capable of carrying more massive buildings than the mere huts of the first and few dwellers on these islands. The canals, the dykes, the drains are proof of the energy required to make the place inhabitable and are evidence of the pertinacious quality of a race which was able to wring from its inhospitable home both strength and security. And in truth that courageous toil was fruitful of great issues, for no sooner had the fugitives fixed their home in the group of islands at Rialto — called by John the Deacon “the second Venice” to distinguish it from Venice of the mainland — than they elected a triumvirate whose duty it was to enlarge the island of Rialto, to reclaim the marsh lands, and to secure the safety of the *lido* against the sea. Other islands joined themselves

to the new city: Scopolo, Dorsoduro, Spinalunga, Luprio, Mendigola, the two Gemine or Gemelle, Ombriola, and Olivolo, all of them formed of firm, calcareous soil, intermixed with broken shells; they were called *tomba*,<sup>1</sup> from the Greek *τύμβος* (a heap of earth); the mudbanks, called *velme* and *barene*, were reclaimed and rendered inhabitable; such were Iria, Cco, Biria, Plombiola, Cannaregio, Teran, Adrio, and Bancaria.<sup>2</sup> There were sixty, or according to others seventy, of these banks which went to make up Venice.

The churches, round which the houses were built and which formed the nucleus of the quarter or *contrada*, show us the development of the city, which, after the middle of the twelfth century,<sup>3</sup> was divided into six districts (*sestieri*), three on one side of the Grand Canal—namely, Castello, San Marco, and Cannaregio—and three on the other—to wit, San Polo, Santa Croce, and Dorsoduro.

The *sestiere* of Castello comprised the island of Olivolo, at the extreme corner of Venice, where stood the ancient castle that gave its name to the quarter. Legend would have us believe that this castle was founded by Antenor, the leader of the Eneti, as a protection for the lagoon islands. The castle was called *Castrum Olivoli*, and hence the name Castello was applied to that part of the city originally called Olivolo. Here stood the ancient church, subject to the jurisdiction of the patriarchs of Grado and dedi-

<sup>1</sup> Gallicciolli, *Delle memorie Ven. profane ed Ecclesiastiche*, Vol. I, p. 59. Venezia, MDCCXCV.

<sup>2</sup> Id., *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 54, 55.

<sup>3</sup> It would seem that this took place in 1171, under the Doge Vitale Michiel, and not under Agnello Partecipazio (811–827), as some erroneously affirm.





cated to Saints Sergius and Bacchus. They say this church was rebuilt in 774 by Magno, Bishop of Oderzo, and dedicated to Saint Peter. It was again rebuilt by Bishop Orso Partecipazio (822) and restored many times, and remained the Cathedral of Venice till 1807. Hard by the canal of San Pietro were the two churches and two monasteries of Sant' Anna and San Domenico and the hospital for seamen. On the left of the *rio di Castello*, not far from the Church of the Celestia, was the arsenal, embracing that part now known as the *Arsenale Vecchio*. This *sestiere* extended up to the *rio del Palazzo Ducale* and contained, besides those mentioned, the following churches: San Biagio, San Martino, Santa Ternita (Santa Trinità), San Giovanni in Bragora, Sant' Antonino, San Rocollo, San Giovanni Nuovo, San Severo, Santa Maria Formosa, Santa Marina, and San Lio.

The *sestiere* of San Marco contained San Basso, San Geminiano, Santa Maria *in capite brolii* (Ascensione), San Giuliano, San Salvatore, San Bartolomeo, San Luca, San Paterniano, San Benedetto, Sant' Angelo, San Vitale, San Samuele, San Maurizio, Santa Maria Zobenigo,<sup>1</sup> San Fantino, and San Moisè.

The [*sestiere* of Cannaregio (*canalecto*, *canaledò*), probably so called from the stores of reeds gathered there from the mainland and used for thatching houses and churches, began at the canal subsequently called the *rio del Fondaco dei Tedeschi* and ended at the canal of Cannaregio. It contained the churches of San Geremia, Santa Lucia, San Leonardo, San Marcuola (Santi Ermagora e Fortunato), Santa Maria Maddalena, Santa Fosca, San Marcilian (San Marziale), San Felice,

<sup>1</sup> So called from the island or else from the Jubanico, the name of the family that built it.



Santa Sofia, Santi Apostoli, San Giovanni Crisostomo, San Canciano, Santa Maria Nuova.

Of the other three *sestieri* lying beyond the Grand Canal, the *sestiere* of San Polo embraced the churches of San Tomà, San Stin (Santo Stefanino), Sant' Apollinare, San Silvestro, and San Giacomo di Rialto.

The *sestiere* of Dorsoduro, which derived its name from the greater solidity of its soil, was originally inhabited by poor fisher-folk, as it lay more exposed to attack from foes or pirates. It comprised the parish churches of San Raffaello, San Basilio, San Niccolò, San Trovaso (Santi Gervasio e Protasio), San Barnaba, Santa Margherita, San Pantaleone, Sant' Agnese, San Vio (San Vito), San Gregorio, and the island of Spinalunga or Giudecca.

Lastly, in the *sestiere* of Santa Croce we find San Simeone the Apostle and San Simeone the Prophet, San Giovanni Decollato, Sant' Jacopo dall' Orio, San Boldo (Sant' Ubaldo), San Stae (Sant' Eustachio), Santa Maria Mater Domini, and San Cassiano. The names of the greater number of the founders of these churches were to be rendered illustrious by the valour of their descendants in years to come.

Round about Venice lay, to the east, several islands which were gradually enlarged and made pleasant abodes: Sant' Andrea (now Certosa), Sant' Elena of the Olivetan monks, San Giorgio Maggiore, San Servilio, San Lazzaro, destined to the care of lepers, and Santa Maria in Nazareth, where rose the monastery of the hermits of Sant' Agostino. At the point of the canal Orfano a little hut, that served as a shelter to the fishermen, was presently to be the nucleus of the hermitage and hospital of San Clemente. To the north lay Murano and San Michele, belonging to the



THE Rialto Bridge—detail from the picture "The Miracle of the Holy Cross," by Carpaccio, in the Royal Academy at Venice





Camaldolesi, where at the close of the tenth century there stood a church.<sup>1</sup>

Venice, during this period of growth, must have offered a unique appearance. The chief means of communication was by water, in boats which traversed the innumerable little channels intersecting the tiny islands and also the wider canals which connected one group with another. The canal which divided the city like a winding band was called *della Zirada* at Sant' Andrea and *Businiaco* at San Benedetto. The canal across the Piazza di San Marco was known as the *rio Batario*, the Giudecca canal was called *Canal Vigano*.

Some of the public paths were ten or twelve feet wide, for example at San Marco, Rialto, and San Moisè; others were extremely narrow and frequently crossed each other, winding their way between the houses; these were called *calli*.<sup>2</sup> Others, again, stretched along the edges of the canals and were called *fondamenta*, or more frequently *juncloria*, from *jungere*, to land.

The stretches of land (*terre vacue*) most exposed to inundations were left untilled and only the grass-growing tracts were cultivated. The vast swamps were constantly reclaimed, the reeds cut, and the ground made fertile. *Territori* was the name applied to certain spaces round the houses, *campi*, or *campieli* their diminutive, to the open places in front of the churches, while *corti* meant an inclosed court. Certain marshy lands retained the name of *paluo*, and *arzere* was the title given to the dykes that kept out the water.

<sup>1</sup> Temanza, *Antica Pianta*. Trevisan Bernardo, *Della laguna di Ven.*, p. 79. Venezia, 1715.

<sup>2</sup> They were almost all private property and were sold along with the houses. In ancient contracts we frequently find the concession of safe passage through the *calle*.

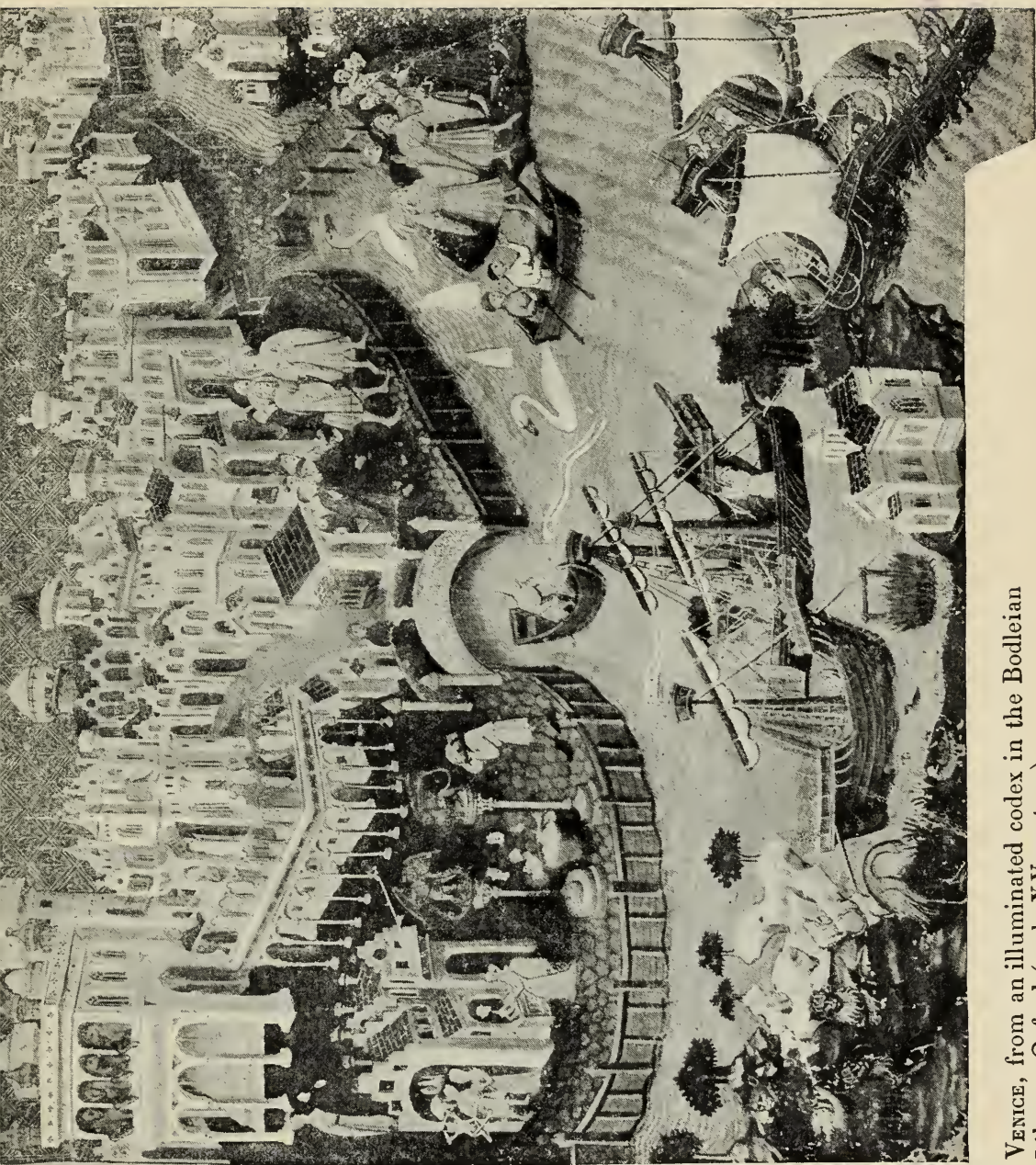
People walked on the bare ground, and down the streets ran the slops from the houses<sup>1</sup>; the swine of Sant' Antonio nosed about in the grass,<sup>2</sup> horses trotted through the town and down the street called the Merceria (the Mercers' street) which led from San Marco to Rialto. Here and there grew wide-spreading trees; for example, near the old Procuratie a great elder to which the magistrates were wont to tie their horses when summoned to the Council by the sound of the bell, which was called the *trottera*, from the trot of the horses and mules which brought the magistrates to the Palazzo Ducale. In 1392 a law put an end to riding in the Merceria, on account of the crowd, and further obliged all horses and mules to carry bells<sup>3</sup> to warn the foot passengers. In the thirteenth century they began to pave the more frequented streets with brick (*lapidibus salizare*). The greater part of the streets, however, remained unpaved, and for a long time to come were traversed by horses. Frequently under the Doge Lorenzo Celsi (1361-1365) a crowd of nobles were to be seen mounted on splendid chargers, following his Serenity, who was a lover of

<sup>1</sup> Although the *Cronaca Altinate* says that the earliest inhabitants of the islands *in omnique parte cloacas fecerunt*, and although we find *latrine sotterranee* and *subterraneos conductos* in documents of 1134 and 1205, nevertheless they usually emptied their slops into the street. Cecchetti, *La vita dei Veneziani nel 1300* (Arch. Veneto, T. XXVII, p. 26).

<sup>2</sup> Archivio di Stato, Magg. Consiglio, *Leona*, p. 188, Oct. 10, 1409. "Cum ista animalia porcina que sub specie et reverentia Sancti Antonii vadunt per civitatem nostram Venetiarum faciant et committant plurima et diversa mala tam contra pueros quam in stratis et fundamentis, propter suum rumare in damnum et deformitatem nostre civitatis. . . . Vadit pars," etc.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, c. 60, Aug. 29, 1392. "Pro obviando multis malis que in currendos equos in diebus estivis in platea Sancti Marci possent occurrere."





VENICE, from an illuminated codex in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (early XV century)



show and a connoisseur in horsemanship<sup>1</sup>; while the stables of the Doge Michele Steno (1400-1413) were among the finest in Italy.

In the fifteenth century many of the streets were paved with brick, set edgewise and in herring-bone pattern, or with paving stones, whence comes the name *salizada* (*selciato*), or paved way. The word *ruga*, which at first indicated a row of contiguous houses (*ruga domorum*), came to be applied to some of these paved ways and roads, such as the *ruga degli orefici a Rialto*.<sup>2</sup>

The wooden bridges, of low span or even quite flat, without steps, for whose construction and up-keep the neighbourhood was responsible, were now built of stone. The most ancient of these stone bridges of which we find documentary record is the bridge of San Zaccaria (1170). The Rialto bridge was designed in 1178 by Nicolò Barattieri, and was carried on pontoons.<sup>3</sup> It was known as the bridge *della moneta* (the paying bridge) or *del quartarolo* (the farthing bridge), either because of the neighbouring mint or because before the bridge was built a farthing was the fare of the ferryboats, called *scaule*, which carried passengers from one side of the canal to the other. In 1255 and 1264 the Rialto bridge was rebuilt, still in wood, but wider. The new bridge was carried on beams and could be raised in the middle.<sup>4</sup>

The ferries, too, the *traghetti*, were an ancient institution. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we

<sup>1</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Dogi*, p. 600 (*Rer. It. Script.*, Vol. XXII).

<sup>2</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, pp. 265, 270.

<sup>3</sup> But the *Cronaca* di Nicolò Trevisan, c. 44 (Biblioteca Marciana, Cl. VII, Cod. DXIX), says, "Mistro Zuane fese el primo ponte de Rialto, che prima se passava con *scolle* (*scaule*)."

<sup>4</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 149.



find recorded the ferries of San Gregorio, San Felice, San Tomà, San Samuele, San Cassiano, San Vito, Santa Lucia, also the ferries to Murano, to Mestre, to Rialto, and Cannaregio, Chioggia to Rialto, and Padua to Rialto.<sup>1</sup>

The canals,<sup>2</sup> which were closed with chains for greater safety, occasionally had trees along their banks. From a labyrinth of narrow ditches one came out into broad ponds (*piscine*) or lakes (*laghi*),<sup>3</sup> into creeks or estuaries, or else found oneself among green meadows, where the cattle grazed, or among vineyards or orchards, or else among low, thick-growing scrub. At Santa Marta was a wood known as "Wolf's Point," and another stretched along the Barbaria delle Tole; on the lagoon, in front of Saint Mark's, rose the black cypresses of San Giorgio, called therefore St. George of the

<sup>1</sup> The boatmen of these ferries made little wooden boathouses, called *cavane*, to shelter their boats. The men united in a confraternity (*fraglia*), of which the by-laws, dating from the fourteenth century, are still extant.

<sup>2</sup> The artificial canals were started by excavation, the natural scour deepened them and kept them open. They were called *comenzarie* or *scomenzere*.

<sup>3</sup> Cecchetti (*Archivio Veneto*), T. II, p. 95, calls attention to certain *laghi* and *piscine*. He gets the names from the archives of some of the suppressed convents preserved in the collection of *Manimorte* at the Archivio di Stato. Here are some of them, with their dates: 1013, Dorsoduro, near the canal Businiaco; 1075, at San Gregorio; 1079, belonging to Giovanni Morosini, the protospatharius, and to his brother Domenico, near the canal Vigano at San Gregorio; 1165, belonging to the Badoer, close to San Giacomo dall' Orio and the rio Marin; 1188, at San Simeone. *Piscine* are recorded in 1081, near the rio Tornarico; 1148, at San Moisè; 1166, at San Zulian; 1177, at Santa Giustina; 1178, at San Salvatore; 1185, at San Cassiano; 1193, at San Giovanni Evangelista; 1204, at Sant' Agostino. Girolamo Zanetti (*Dell' orig. di alcune arti princ. appresso i Ven.*, p. 68, Venezia, 1841) records a notarial act, dated 1107, *mense madii, inditione VII, Rivoalti*, which speaks of a lake, the property of the Church of San Pantaleone; from the document marked 1222 we gather that this lake was of great extent, as it spread *ad oram sanctae crucis*.





VENETIE.  
.MD.







Cypresses. Here and there one came on salt-pans, built in stone, large and strong, with dams and banks, inlets and outlets, and channels for the water (*transjaglacio*), *junctorio*,<sup>1</sup> and even with fishing and shooting preserves,<sup>2</sup> though it is true that fishing and shooting were generally confined to those tracts of the lagoon later on called *valli*, which were enclosed within a palisade of wattle (*grisiolo*). The mills were shut in between banks in order to increase the power of the flood and the ebb tides on the floats of their wheels. They were called *acquimoli* or *sedilia*.<sup>3</sup> Among the houses and high over the roofs, on the quiet surface of the lagoon, in a harmony of line and colour, rose the sails which were to open the era of that commercial

<sup>1</sup> In August, 1101, a salt-pan belonging to the Monastery of San Giorgio was sold, *et est cum scannos et secundas et lidis et virgis et geminis et piaduriis et divisionibus de argele et morariis et domnicis et saltariis et vigore et robore ab intus et foris* (Arch. di Stato, *Manimorte*, San Giorgio Maggiore, B. 28). The salt-pans were let for a fixed number of years at a rent of one or more bushels (*moggia*) of salt, or for the product of one or more days (see in Appendix Doc. B). The salt-pans were very numerous; for example, one Domenico di Foscaro Niciuro, of the village of Murano, sells *duas sallinas de ipsas viginti octo* erected on his property (Arch. della fabbr. di Santa Maria e Donato di Murano, March, 1042); and on September 25, 1343, the family of Gradenigo divide various salt-pans near Chioggia (Arch. priv. Correr, Cod. II).

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Manimorte*, San Giorgio Maggiore, B. 27, dic. 1084.

<sup>3</sup> Mills were either movable or fixed. The movable mills were carried in great boats, called *sandonos*, and were worked by the ebb and flow of the tide, six hours one way and six the other. Fixed mills were erected on the mudbanks. Above was the mill and the miller's house; below, a large part of the lagoon was walled in so as to form a pond, with a door to let in the water, which was then directed by brick conduits so as to strike the floats of the mill-wheel, called *formae*. Filiasi, *op. cit.*, T. III, Cap. LXII. At the beginning of the fourteenth century windmills were introduced. The first was erected in 1332 upon the mudbanks near San Michele at Murano by a certain Bartolomeo Verde. Zanetti, G., *op. cit.*, p. 68.



activity which, from year to year, brought fresh prosperity to the country.

The Eunuch Narses, who came to Venice in 552 to seek aid against the Goths, according to the *Cronaca Altinate*, built two churches in the islands of Rialto, in the orchard, or *brolo*, which afterwards became the property of the nuns of San Zaccaria, one on the *rivo* Batario, dedicated to San Geminiano, the other to San Teodoro, on the site of which Saint Mark's was subsequently raised.<sup>1</sup> The Doge Giustiniano Partecipazio (827-829) bought the orchard, which was surrounded by trees and humble dwellings, from the nuns. In the ninth century, as a protection against attack, the orchard was enclosed by a battlemented wall. Another wall stretched along the present *riva degli Schiavoni*.<sup>2</sup> In the tenth century the campanile was begun in the orchard of Saint Mark's, when Domenico Morosini was Doge (1148-1156). It was carried up about sixty metres and finished between 1178 and 1180 by Nicolò Barattieri.<sup>3</sup> Hard by the campanile, Pietro Orseolo I (976) built a hospital or lodging for pilgrims to the Holy Land, and called it after San Marco. In 1156, while Vitale Michiel II was Doge, the *rivo* Batario was

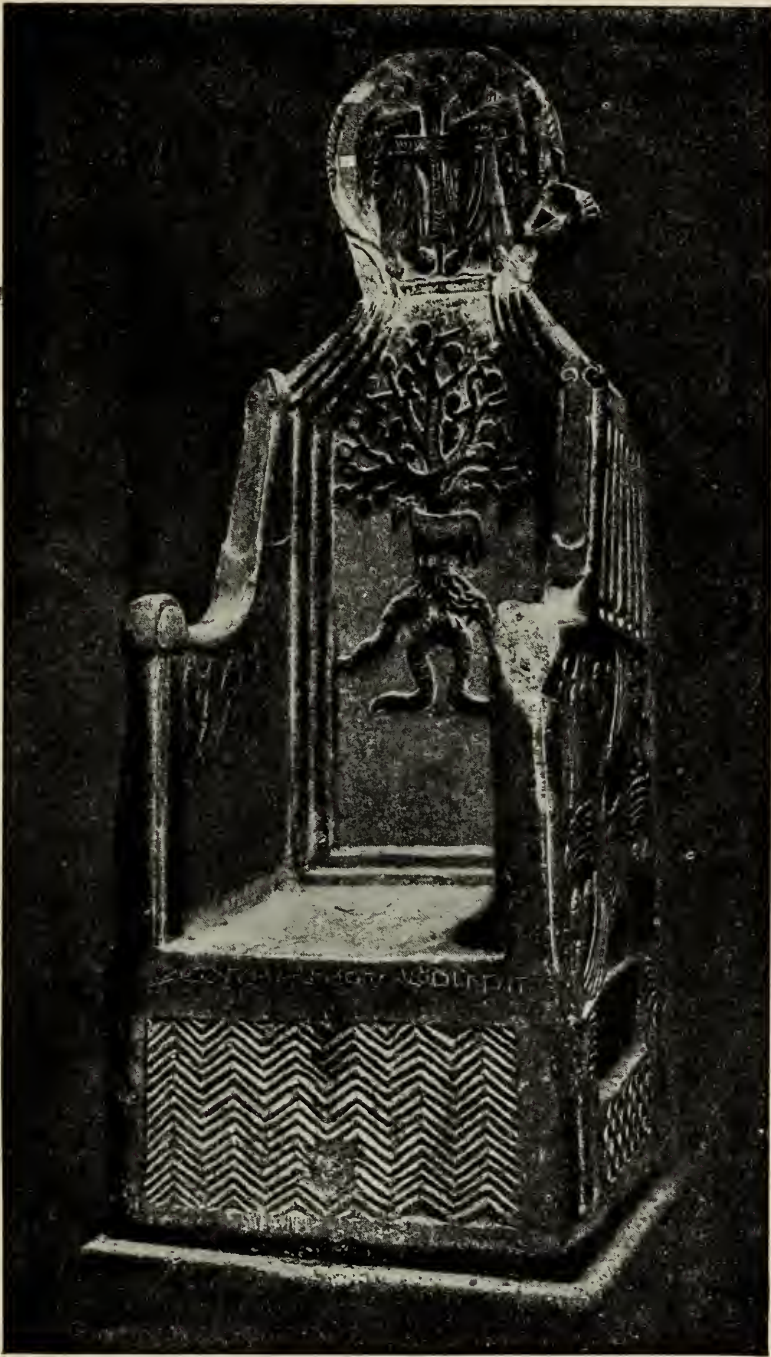
<sup>1</sup> Dandolo, *Chr.*, XII, 92. The visit of Narses and the foundation of the two churches has been denied by some, but not on sufficient grounds. The better authorities have confirmed the account given in the *Cronaca Altinate* and by Dandolo. Cfr. Simonsfeld, *Sulle scoperte nella Cron. Alt.* (*Archivio Veneto*, T. XXXV, p. 127), and Monticolo, *I mss. e le fonti della Cron. del Diac. Giovanni*, p. 202, n. 1. Roma, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Pietro Tribuno (888-912), in the ninth year of his reign, built a wall from the *rivo di Castello* to Santa Maria Zobenigo, where a great chain crossed the canal and was fastened to the Church of San Gregorio. Dandolo, *Chr.*, p. 941.

<sup>3</sup> The campanile foundations were hardly five metres deep and almost perpendicular. Boni, *Campanile e suoi fondamenti* (in *La Basilica di San Marco*, Cap. XXI. Venezia, Ongania, 1888).

N. Y. State

Archaeology



THE CHAIR OF S. MARCO (TESORO DI S. MARCO)



filled in, and in 1172 the Doge Sebastian Ziani widened the piazza, which later on was paved with brick laid edgewise and in herring-bone pattern, and adorned it with loggias that eventually became the dwelling of the procurators of San Marco. He pulled down the old church of San Geminiano and rebuilt it further back, right opposite the basilica.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1177 three canons of Saint Peter's at Rome declared the piazza to be very wide and spacious—*platea beati Marci magna nimis et spaciosa*.<sup>2</sup> In the thirteenth century the Dogaressa Loicia da Prata, wife of Rinieri Zeno (1253–1268), enlarged Pietro Orseolo's hospital and brought it into line with the campanile. The campanile itself was renovated in 1369 by an architect called Montagnana, and was frequently repaired and restored after the fires of 1400 and 1403 and the lightning strokes of 1388 and 1417. Round the base of the great tower crowded the shops of hucksters (*strazzarioli*), stone-cutters, money-changers, and a *loggetta*, which in the thirteenth century served as a rendezvous for the nobles, and in 1300, after the conspiracy of Marin Bocconio, became the meeting-place of the procurators of San Marco during sittings of the Great Council. Destroyed by fire and ruined by earthquake and lightning, it was frequently rebuilt during the fifteenth century. In front of the basilica, planted in sockets of wood called *abati*, the standards of Saint Mark—*tantum pulcra quantum fieri possunt et de optimo cendali torto*<sup>3</sup>—floated on all solemn

<sup>1</sup> The enlargement of both the greater and the lesser piazza is due to the Doge Ziani, who pulled down the wall which surrounded them. Temanza's plan shows both piazza and piazzetta with battlements.

<sup>2</sup> Sanudo, *Le vite dei Dogi* (*Rer. Ital. Script.*), ed. Monticolo, p. 302. Città di Castello, 1900.

<sup>3</sup> Archivio di Stato, *Collegio Notatoria*, Decr. 15 febr., 1376.



occasions. Facing the Ducal Palace stood bakers', butchers', and other shops, as well as inns for strangers. In the piazzetta, close to the twin columns, there was a market for poultry and fish.

In the year 1342 the foundations of the quay or *molo* were laid, and in 1363 the wooden bridge—known as the Ponte della Paglia, from the boats laden with straw that moored there—was built. Where Sansovino's mint now stands rose the old mint built in 1227, and where to-day one sees the greenery of the Royal Garden there used to be a ship-building yard, which, in 1298, put as many as fifteen galleys in the water. This subsidiary arsenal was known as Terranova, and when it was suppressed the government, in 1340, built upon the site a vast public granary. Hard by was a zoölogical garden and the Doge's stables, while at no great distance lay the prisons. In 1365 Petrarch thought the piazza so beautiful that he exclaimed, *nescio an terrarum orbis parem habeat*.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, by order of the Great Council, some wells were sunk in the piazza. The piazza itself was paved with stone in 1392, under the Doge Antonio Venier; and possibly in 1406 they laid down that design in bands of white marble which, according to some authorities, marked off the position of merchants' stalls, and in the opinion of others gave the name of the *liston* to this public promenade. A picture in the Museo Civico, attributed to Carpaccio, but more probably the work of Lazzaro Sebastiani, shows us the piazza of San Marco as it was in the middle ages, before the cinquecento had left upon it its magnificent imprint. There we see the old *loggetta* at the foot of the campanile, and in a line with it, and just opposite the Palazzo Ducale, the



THE PIAZZETTA, FROM A PICTURE BY LAZZARO SEBASTIANI. (MUSEO CIVICO)





beautiful building of the public bakery with two loggias of Saracenic arches. An idealised view of Venice, executed with rude simplicity, is to be found in a manuscript of the early quattrocento preserved in the Bodleian Library<sup>1</sup>; and Breydenbach, a pilgrim to the Holy Land, on his way through Venice, made a sketch of the mediæval city which was reproduced in a woodcut designed by Erard Reüwick. In his book the pilgrim dwells on the naval power, the commercial and artistic prosperity of the city which he names *anti-quissima, clarissima, et florentissima*.<sup>2</sup> It is enough to compare the *Antica pianta di Venezia* of Temanza with the view in Breydenbach, the panorama in the *Cronaca Norimbergense*,<sup>3</sup> and the beautiful plan attributed to Albert Dürer, but now assigned to Jacopo de' Barbari,<sup>4</sup> to see how the city had grown from its humble beginnings to an admirable amplitude, and had already, at the close of the fifteenth century, begun to accumulate triumphs of Renaissance art.

From its earliest infancy Venice took every care to make the seat of her government commodious and beautiful. From Ravenna, rich in gems of ancient art, from Istria and Dalmatia, where Roman remains were abundant, from the East, from Syria

<sup>1</sup> *Livres du graunt Caum qui parole de la graunt Armenie de Persie et des Tartares*, etc., c. 218. Bibl. Bodleiana, Oxford, MS. n. 264. The view of Venice is on page 218.

<sup>2</sup> Breydenbach, *Sanctarum Peregrin. in Montem Syon*, etc. Maguntia, 1486.

<sup>3</sup> On page xliii. Norimberga, 1493.

<sup>4</sup> Its date is 1500, and it represents Venice and its islands, in high relief. The original wood-block in six pieces is preserved in the Museo Civico. Some impressions of this plan, bearing the date MD, show us the campanile with a low bell chamber covered with tiles and without the pyramid. In other impressions the bell chamber is crowned by the pyramid.

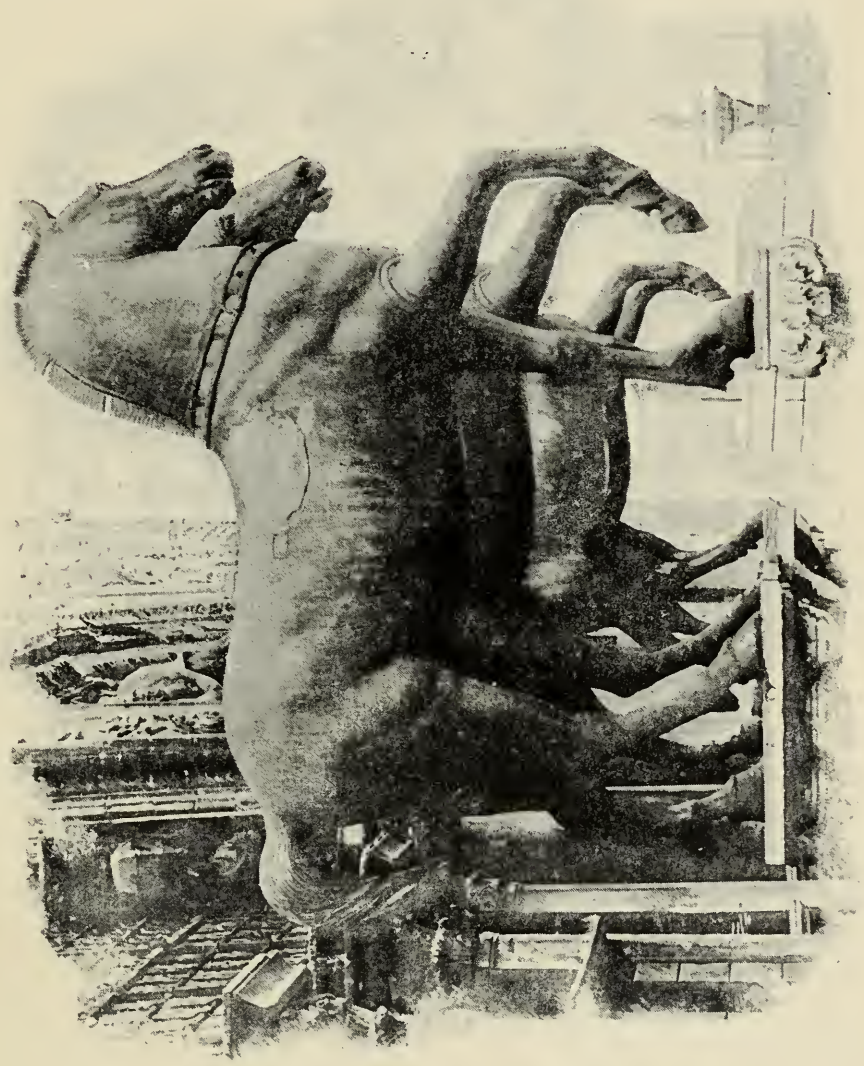


and Egypt, the ships of Saint Mark returned laden with inscriptions, with bas-reliefs, with pictures, lions, columns, statues in precious marbles, destined to adorn the growing city.<sup>1</sup> From Acre, as it would seem, came the porphyry group of four figures, near the Porta della Carta of the Palazzo Ducale. They probably formed part of a monumental column. In the twelfth century three great columns were brought from Constantinople,<sup>2</sup> two of which were erected in the piazzetta by that same Nicolò Barattieri who made the first Rialto bridge.

In 1205 the four horses that adorned the hippodrome of Constantinople were placed over the porch of the

<sup>1</sup> Nor must we omit the gifts of emperors and kings. For example, in the treasury of Saint Mark's there is the marble chair, believed to be the chair of the evangelist, which they say was presented by the Emperor Heraclius to Primigenio, Patriarch of Grado, in 630. There is also another marble chair given to the Republic by the Emperor Michael Palæologus, believed to be the chair whereon Saint Peter sat in Antioch. It is now in the Church of San Pietro di Castello. The first is Byzantine work belonging to the last years of the sixth century or the opening of the seventh. The second has its back made of a funeral cippus showing Saracen soldiery slain in battle, and has on it a verse of the Koran.

<sup>2</sup> There were originally three columns brought from Constantinople, but one fell into the sea and was never recovered. Of the two columns now in place, one is of gray oriental granite and carries on the top the lion; the other is of reddish oriental granite and bears the figure of San Teodoro. That figure is chiefly made up of a Roman fragment. Some historians give the date of the transportation of these columns as 1125, others as 1171, others place it earlier or later. It is improbable that the two columns lay for many years on the ground for lack of an architect capable of erecting them. The story is that they were raised to the perpendicular in 1172 by Nicolò Barattieri. On the other hand, the *Cronaca* of Trevisan says, *Fu eduto da Constantinopoli tre colone grande, delle qual una de esse descargandola la cazete ne lacque, e mai non se pote averla. Le altre doi fo trate in terra e per Zuane* (the man who made the Rialto bridge) *le fo levate impiedi, si come si vede ne la piazza de San Marco.*



THE BRONZE HORSES ON THE FAÇADE OF S. MARCO



basilica, and in 1256 the two pilasters captured at Acre<sup>1</sup> were put in position before the door of the baptistery. Then as now the pigeons, which give an air of life and movement to the Venetian monuments, fluttered above the buildings, undisturbed by the roar of business or the noise of the crowd. On Palm Sunday they were let loose from Saint Mark's, and flew away to breed and multiply and to find everywhere food and shelter.<sup>2</sup>

Castello was the religious centre of the new city, the see of the bishopric. Around Saint Mark's, the shrine of the evangelist, and the palace of the Doges the magistrates, both civil and political, had their abode, and by their authority held in check what might have been the too exuberant vitality of the growing nation; while the active business life of Venice was concentrated at Rialto in the throng of sailors and merchants. For long the city was known as *Rivoaltus* and its port was called San Nicolò di Rialto; while the name *Venezia* was applied to the group of townships of the Venetian

<sup>1</sup> It is also said that in 1256 Lorenzo Tiepolo brought from Acre that marble medallion which is still to be seen on the outer wall of a house in the Campiello Angaran, called Zen, at San Pantaleone. Some hold that it is one of the spoils of Constantinople (1204). It represents in bas-relief a Byzantine emperor of the second half of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. Schlumberger, *Bas-relief du campo Angaran*, etc. (*Rivista Bizantina*. Leipzig, 1893). Venturi (*St. dell' arte Italiana*, Vol. II, p. 540, n. 1. Milano, 1902) thinks the work belongs to the late twelfth century.

<sup>2</sup> An ancient legend has it that the pigeons of San Marco are the descendants of those flocks of pigeons which followed — *natis in beccis* — the fugitives from Oderzo in their flight from the barbarians. The chronicles, on the other hand, record an ancient custom of liberating pigeons on Palm Sunday. Others, again, think their introduction is due to an imitation of the habit, common in Russia and Persia, of keeping pigeons at the public expense.



littoral, which, with Heraclea as its capital, formed the dukedom under the first Doge Paoluccio Anafesto.<sup>1</sup>

The actual island of Rialto, so called either because a stream called Prealto flowed into an arm of the Brenta there, or from the height of its banks, was made up of the parishes of San Jacopo, San Matteo, and San Giovanni Elemosinario. The traffic of the civilised world centred at Rialto. Even in the tenth century, there were shops on the ground floor, a slaughter-house, and one reads of its admirable order in 1097,—*onore nostri mercati*.<sup>2</sup> Later on they put up a clock and a loggia for the merchants, and towards the close of 1300 the porticoes (*cohopertura ornata*) were rearranged and became the meeting-place for the traffickers of many nations. The mint lay on the other side of the canal at San Bartolomeo. It was built in the middle of the ninth century, and there is a record that the land on which it stood was sold in 1112.<sup>3</sup> In 1322 orders were issued to enlarge the Rialto, and especially the fish-market, by pulling down *quedam domus seu stationes parve quas tenent certi fructaroli et caseroli*, and by taking away the fishmongers' benches<sup>4</sup>; and in 1339 the flesh-market was established in that part of the "great house" of the Quirini which was still standing,<sup>5</sup> known

<sup>1</sup> The most ancient example of the use of the word "Venezia" as the name of the city we find in the following passage from Cod. Vat. 5273: *Anno Domini quatuor centum viginti unum edificatio Venecie*. Monticolo, *Spigolature d'Archivio* (Nuovo Arch. Ven., T. III, p. 386).

<sup>2</sup> From a deed of gift of the brothers Tissone and Pietro Orio (1097). *Codice Trevisano*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Padovan and Cecchetti, *Sommario della nummografia Veneziana*, p. vii. Venezia, 1866.

<sup>4</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Commemoriali* 11, p. 129 (13 dicembre, 1322).

<sup>5</sup> The part of the Casa Querini which belonged to the brothers Mareo and Pietro, who had taken part in the conspiracy of Bajamonte Tiepolo, was destroyed. The part belonging to the third brother, Giovanni, who



MARBLE Medallion in the Corte  
Angaran at S. Pantaleone





as the *stalon*, which ended by becoming the poultry-market. In 1459 the long porticoes of Rialto were adorned with a chart or *mappamondo*, showing the trade routes of Venetian commerce. The clock on the tower of San Giovanni was famous even outside Venice; it was made in the early years of the quattrocento, a marvellous piece of mechanism which, in the words of its maker, Gasparo Ubaldini, *sona le ore et vene fora un galo el qual canta tre volte per ora*.<sup>1</sup> Special officers were appointed to superintend the buildings and all else connected with Rialto.<sup>2</sup>

The aspect of the city is described with rugged effectiveness in a poem by Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi, a Florentine who came with his family to Venice in 1427. The merchant-poet omits no detail, — the origin, the martial and civil glories of the State, its government, laws, magistrates, the islands of the lagoon, the art-guilds, the churches, palaces, arsenal, the possessions of the Republic, etc.<sup>3</sup> When Jacopo found himself in front of the basilica and the Ducal Palace he was swept away in an ecstasy which he vainly tries to express in his rude verses. There, before him, were the Procuratie, and, hard by, the public bakery, the flesh-market, the fish-market, the fruit-market, the mint *de ducati e de grossoni*, the twin columns, the shops of the ironmongers, the hucksters, the sellers of plates and bowls,

was not among the conspirators, was respected. It was afterwards acquired by the State and became the flesh-market of Rialto. Julin, *La Casa Grande dei tre fratelli Quirini* (Arch. Veneto, T. XI, p. 147).

<sup>1</sup> Milanese, *Doc. per la st. dell' arte Sanese*. Siena, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Provveditori al Sal. Capitolare*, I, a.

<sup>3</sup> Rossi, V., *Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi e il suo inedito poema su Venezia* (Nuovo Archivio Veneto, T. V, p. 397 et seq.).



E appresso a questo v'è un' osteria  
 Sì bene in punto e di camere belle  
 Da raccettare ongni gran brigata  
 D'ambasciatori e chi porta novelle.<sup>1</sup>

(And hard by this there stands an inn so well appointed and with chambers fair, to house, however great, a suite of ambassadors or other bringers of tidings.)

Guidi then moves up the Merceria, *bella via ammattonata*, "a fair, brick-paved street," with the fine shops of the cloth-of-gold mercers, the silk-mercers, the dealers in velvet and fustian; further on came the druggists and the gold and silver smiths. When he reaches Rialto

È un ponte non fatto di spalto  
 Ma di legname sì ben lavorato,

(where stands a bridge not made of hewn stone, but of wood right skilfully wrought), Messer Jacopo is amazed at the busy crowd and wanders about among the benches of the fruit, fish, and poultry dealers, where he sees great quantities of *osele tutte pelate ch'è una meraviglia e tanto grasse che paiono pur torte* (a marvellous store of little birds all plucked and so fat that they look like doves). He pushes on into the side streets among the shops of the rope sellers, the bakers, the pork butchers, and the fleshers, until he comes to the street of the coopers, then turning back towards Rialto he looks at the shops of the goldsmiths, jewellers, embroiderers, tailors, and cloth merchants. At last he comes out on the *riva del Ferro*, called later on the *riva del Vin*; he marvels at the custom house and the arrangement of the offices attached thereto, at the noble Corn Exchange, and all the warehouses bursting with tuns of Muscat and of Malmsey wine.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, as Rossi thinks, this was the inn at the sign of the "Serpent," where, in 1483, the Turkish ambassador was lodged.



THE HOUSE OF THE QUIRINI (STALON) AT RIALTO



The safety and the cleanliness of the streets, the canals, and the quays were the object of attentive supervision; infringement of regulations was punished by fines.<sup>1</sup> From the days of Doge Domenico Michiel care was taken to light the narrow and dangerous passages by lanterns (*cesendeli*) at the public expense and under the charge of the parish.<sup>2</sup> In 1301 the Great Council appointed a commission to report on the canals and ponds (*piscine*), which should be dredged out and which ought to be filled in.<sup>3</sup> Excellent arrangements were made to insure a sanitary state of the cemeteries<sup>4</sup>; works were undertaken to secure pure drinking water from sound cisterns<sup>5</sup>; unhealthy industries were removed from the inhabited quarters<sup>6</sup>; public granaries were erected at San Biagio<sup>7</sup>; a fire

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Liber Plegiorum* (1224). *Liber Commanis* or *Plegiorum*, containing Acts of the Government from October 30, 1223, to May, 1253. A calendar has been published by R. Predelli, Venezia, 1872. This is the most ancient volume of official acts which exists in the archives, and is full of valuable details illustrating the private life of Venice.

<sup>2</sup> These lanterns, called *cesendeli*, from the Latin *cicindela* (a little light), were, for the most part, hung before the images of saints, which stood by the wayside. In an ancient manuscript Angelo Amadi relates that, in 1408, his grandfather, Francesco degli Amadi, caused to be painted a panel with the Madonna and Child, and placed it, *al modo nostro Veneziano*, at an angle of a narrow passage on the corner of a house close to his own. This panel of the Amadi family gave rise to the church of the Miracoli, dedicated to the worship of this actual picture. Boni, *Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venezia* (*Archivio Veneto*, T. XXXIII, p. 237).

<sup>3</sup> Cecchetti, *La vita dei Veneziani nel 1300* (*Archivio Veneto*, T. XXVII, p. 16). For leave to fill in any part of the lagoon a fine of a pair of chamois-leather gloves, or a small sum of money, or a pound of fruit, or pepper, and so on, was due to the Doge. Cecchetti (p. 54) cites many documents relating to the dredging of canals and channels.

<sup>4</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Maggior Consiglio*, *Spiritus*, p. 154, V° (April 3, 1348).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, *Fronesis*, p. 156 (Aug. 29, 1325).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, *Pilosus*, p. 15 B. (Nov. 8, 1291).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, *Fronesis*, p. 96, V° (Sept. 18, 1322).



brigade was organised<sup>1</sup>; and lastly, to omit many other regulations, the government, which overlooked no detail, did not forget to prohibit taverners from putting water in their wine.<sup>2</sup>

One of the oldest magistracies of the Republic, the *Signori di Notte* was organised in the middle of the thirteenth century. It was composed of six patricians appointed as guardians of the public safety during the night time, with power also to compel the payment of house rent, to proceed against bigamists, bravoos, assassins, and thieves, and entrusted with the up-keep of the roads. The *Capitolare* of the *Signori di Notte*<sup>3</sup> begins in the middle of the twelfth century and ends in 1341. It contains a series of criminal laws which paint for us the habits of the time and give us certain minute particulars of citizen life, that bring before our eyes the ancient Venice. For example, it is forbidden to boil pitch on the *Riva degli Schiavoni* between San Giovanni in Bragora and San Marco, nor was it allowed to drive piles or cast anchor in that space (1270). Orders and prohibitions follow one another in quick succession.

Besides regulating the obstruction of the streets and the discharge of filth into canal or channel or onto the steps of landing-places, public health also received attention in laws forbidding industries which employ material *quae faciunt fumum male sanum*, and preventing rafts of rotting wood from being lashed to the quays. Care was taken against infection from *leprosi et habentes infirmitates abhominabiles*, who stood

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, Maggior Consiglio, *Fronesis*, p. 163 (Dec. 26, 1325).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, *Spiritus*, p. 69, V° (Oct. 21, 1333).

<sup>3</sup> Museo Civico, ms. Cigona, n. 2560. Published by F. Nani Mocenigo, Venezia, 1877.



THE COLUMNS OF THE PIAZZETTA



begging on the bridges or at the doors of the churches, by opening hospitals for their reception. After the conspiracies of the fourteenth century, greater attention was paid to the public safety, and each *Signore di Notte* had his guards increased by two. The messengers (*pueri*) of the government offices at Rialto acted as night watchmen; the piazza and palace were patrolled at night by armed men chosen by the headmen of each *sestiere*; they wore a breastplate and bellyband of iron.

Wise regulations were applied to preserving the integrity of the estuary; a duty intrusted originally to the magistracies of the *Piovego*<sup>1</sup> and the *Provveditori di Comune*. Probably in the reign of Francesco Dandolo (1328–1339) the office of the water-commissioners was first established; it was organised and made permanent in 1505.<sup>2</sup> Its duties were to supervise and maintain the hydrostatic conditions of the lagoon. The lagoon is oblong in form and curved like a sickle. On the one side it is bounded by the mainland, on the other by the narrow line of *lidi* which separate it from the Adriatic. The government, from the very outset, devoted attention, ingenuity, and money to the preservation of the lagoon, upon which depended the health of the city, the existence of the port, and the safety of Venetian independence; for, as a later decree of the sixteenth century phrases it, the waters about the city were regarded as “the sacred bulwarks of the fatherland,” — *sanctos muros patriae*.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that the magistracy of the *Piovego* was founded in the ninth century. At first there was only one magistrate, but in 1282 two others were appointed. In old Venetian dialect, *Piovego* means “public.”

<sup>2</sup> *Antichi testamenti*, published by the *Congregazione di Carità* in Venice. Serie VII, p. 5. Venezia, 1888.



## 44 VENICE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

As early as the twelfth century began the battle with the rivers, which brought down their silt into the lagoon, and from that moment the Republic never ceased to assist the natural ebb and flow of the seawater by wise regulations and by vast hydraulic works directed to preserve in its integrity the entire amplitude of the lagoon; for any diminution of the lagoon surface meant a diminution in the activity of the lagoon-structure, which keeps in movement and determines the direction of the currents, which in their turn maintain the inner channels and the ports, preventing them from silting up and rendering the air unhealthy. Accordingly the *lidi* were constantly repaired, ports were opened or closed, and the fishing grounds were brought under obligations and restrictions which limited the use of banks and palisades; but above all, the mouths of the rivers were diverted from the lagoon and were made to discharge direct into the sea; while the mainland shore of the estuary was surrounded by a strong dyke in order to keep the fresh water from mingling with the salt and thus generating malaria.<sup>1</sup>

In every circumstance of city life the government proved that its vigilance and forethought were equal to any threatened danger. Let us take an example. The plague was a common occurrence in Venice; and during that terrible epidemic of 1348, *la zente era in tanto spavento ch'el pare no voleva andar dal fio nè el fio dal spare*,<sup>2</sup> the government immediately took steps to meet the calamity and appointed a commission of three

<sup>1</sup> At all periods of Venetian history we find numerous publications concerning the lagoon. The bibliographies of Cicogna and Soranzo furnish lists, but many works remain to be added.

<sup>2</sup> From an inscription of January 25, 1347, preserved in the atrium of the Royal Academy, originally the home of the Confraternity *della Carità*.





THE Bridge and Canal of S. Lorenzo (XV century),  
from the picture "The Miracle of the Holy Cross,"  
by Gentile Bellini. (Royal Academy at Venice)

(Photo, Anderson)





nobles, with the title of *savi* or *provveditori sopra la salute della terra*, to cope with the scourge.

Thanks to these provisions, remarkable when we consider their date, the city prospered, adorned itself, and absorbed and fructified the germs of a large and copious life. "You will not find its match in all the world," so said a writer of the thirteenth century, a certain Boncompagno da Signa, doubtless repeating a common phrase; and in the last chapter but four of his curious tract, *De Malo Senectutis*, speaking "*de senibus Venetiarum et constructione civitatis, que regnum merito nuncupatur*," he writes thus of Venice: "*In civitate siquidem Venetiarum senes ex aeris temperantia et moderata dieta virescunt, et medio colori refulgent. Si vero queratur quomodo civitas Venetiarum sit constructa, responderi potest, quod pavementum ejus est mare, celum est tectum, et paries decursus aquarum. Unde tollit facultatem sermonis materia singularis, ex eo quod in orbe terrarum simile regnum non potest nec poterit inveniri.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This work was composed about 1240 and published by F. Novati in the *Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, Serie V, Vol. I, fasc. I, pp. 46-67 (1892). This curious passage was already quoted by Valentinelli (Biblioteca ms. ad S. Marci Venet., IV, 93) where he is describing *Cod. Marciano latino* (Cl. VI, 67), from which Novati took his text.



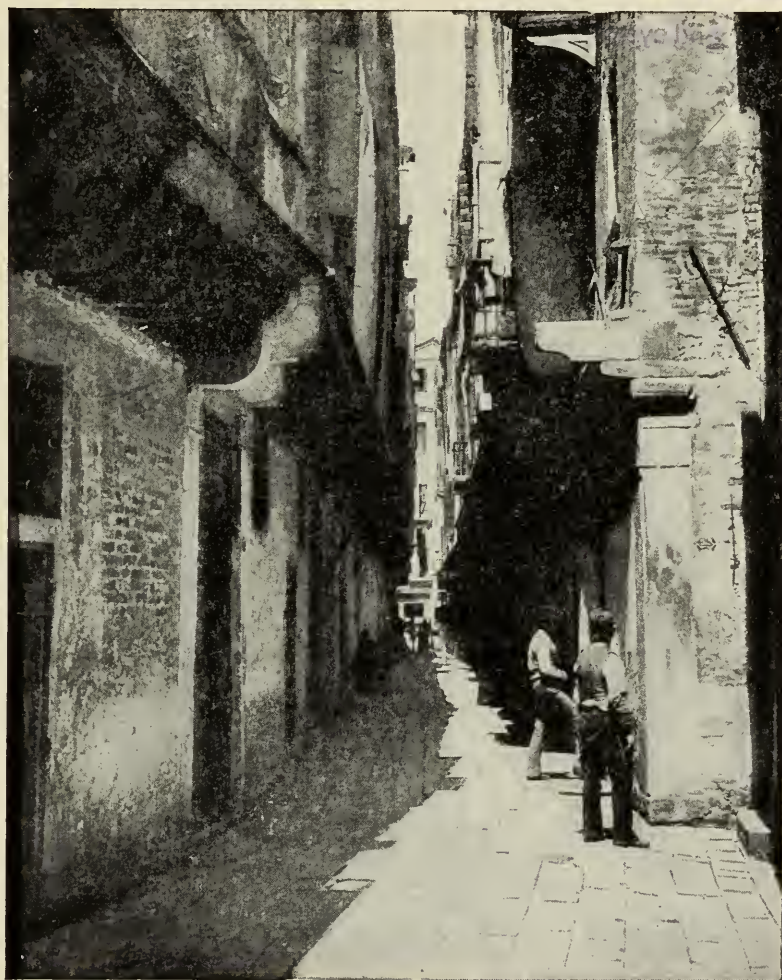
## CHAPTER II

### HOUSES AND CHURCHES

ON the islands of Rialto there rose at first wooden houses only; their foundations were laid on platforms (*zatteroni*) of larch, or on piles, because the ground, being composed of soft mud, clay, peat, and watery sand, was not suited for building in stone.<sup>1</sup> Stone, on the other hand, was in common

<sup>1</sup> These various layers of the subsoil are soft down to the depth of about thirty-five metres, when one comes on a strata of very firm clay about three metres thick. After that the layers of muddy peat, sandy clay of various colours, and watery sand come alternately. In order to render the ground firm enough to carry foundations, wooden platforms were laid in trenches. Notwithstanding the slight resistance offered by the subsoil, the mediæval builders did not make their foundations either very wide or very strong. In the case of the campanile there is only a metre's difference in width between the top of the platform and the spring of the brick shaft. The gradual compression of the clay stratum produces a settlement and sinking of the soil of Venice. According to some, the level of the most antique pavements in the city is two metres below the present pavements; the mediæval pavements are one metre, seventy centimetres, below the actual pavements. This would prove a settlement of about nine centimetres in a century. As a matter of fact the pavements of the streets and the ground floors of houses have frequently to be raised. To get a clearer idea of the insecurity of the Venetian subsoil we must bear in mind that in ancient times it has been broken up by violent earthquakes and subsidences of a volcanic nature. And in fact, if the ground is pierced, we come on tepid mud, while out at sea one meets with currents of warm water and submarine exhalations which indicate the presence of subterranean fire not far off. Of the earthquakes that damaged Venice, the shock of Good Friday, 1102, was among the most terrible. The larger part of the *lido* of Malamocco subsided and the city of Malamocco gradually settled down, leaving time, however, for its inhabitants to fly; then the

N. Y. State



A STREET



use at Torcello, Grado, Heraclea, and Jesolo because the ground there was firmer and also because the ruins of Aquileia, Altinum, and other ancient cities afforded a supply of stone, marbles, columns, and other fragments of pagan monuments.<sup>1</sup> It is only towards the close of the fifteenth century that one finds (for the first time, as some say, but more probably the use only became common then) piles driven in contact to carry the foundations of buildings.<sup>2</sup> However, wooden houses, thatched or roofed with slats (*scandole*),<sup>3</sup> are mentioned as late as the fifteenth century,<sup>4</sup> when it would appear that certain *fabricae ligneae copertae de canna*, thatched wooden houses, were still existing, and it was forbidden to keep lights burning in Rialto after the first hour of night, for fear of fires which might easily break out.<sup>5</sup> The worst fire was that of 1105; the flames, after

houses collapsed, flames rushed up out of the ground, the level of the sea rose suddenly, and the city disappeared beneath the waves.

<sup>1</sup> Among the ruins of the cities destroyed by the barbarians, not only marbles and stone, but treasure and works of art of great value used to be found for many years. Sanudo (*Vite dei Dogi*, ed. Monticolo, p. 302), in the Life of the Doge Sebastiano Ziani (1172-1178) says, "Questo doxe Sebastian Ziani navea un fiol chiamà Piero, et era richo; trovo si dice una vacha maziza d'oro in Altino."

<sup>2</sup> Sagredo, *Sulle consorterie delle arti edificative in Venezia*, p. 39. Venezia, 1856.

<sup>3</sup> Giustinian Bernardo (*De origine urbis*, etc. Venetiis, 1534), speaking of the earliest houses, says, "Solum sternebant et cylindris adæquato, componebant casas aut arundinæas, aut asseritias. Majoribus deinde ædificiis fundamenta supponere didicerunt, aut ex arundinibus, aut ex viminibus, ut nostra etiam ætas in veterum effossionibus ædificiorum hujusmodi sæpe fundamenti genus non sine admiratione reperiatur."

<sup>4</sup> Temanza (*Pianta*, p. 55) reports from the *Cron. del Convento di San Salvatore* that in 1365 the church of San Salvatore was thatched with straw.

<sup>5</sup> A decree of the Great Council May 18, 1307, modified the regulation that artizans at Rialto were not to keep fires or lamps alight in their shops after sundown. An exception was made in favour of those *qui continue cum familia morantur in domibus*. Arch. di Stato, M. C., *Capricornus*, p. 43.



destroying the house of the Dandolos at the Santi Apostoli, spread as far as Santo Stefano. That same year another fire broke out in Ca' Zantani on the island Gemine, and devastated about twenty-three districts. Great fires occurred also in 1114, 1115, 1120, 1149, 1167, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

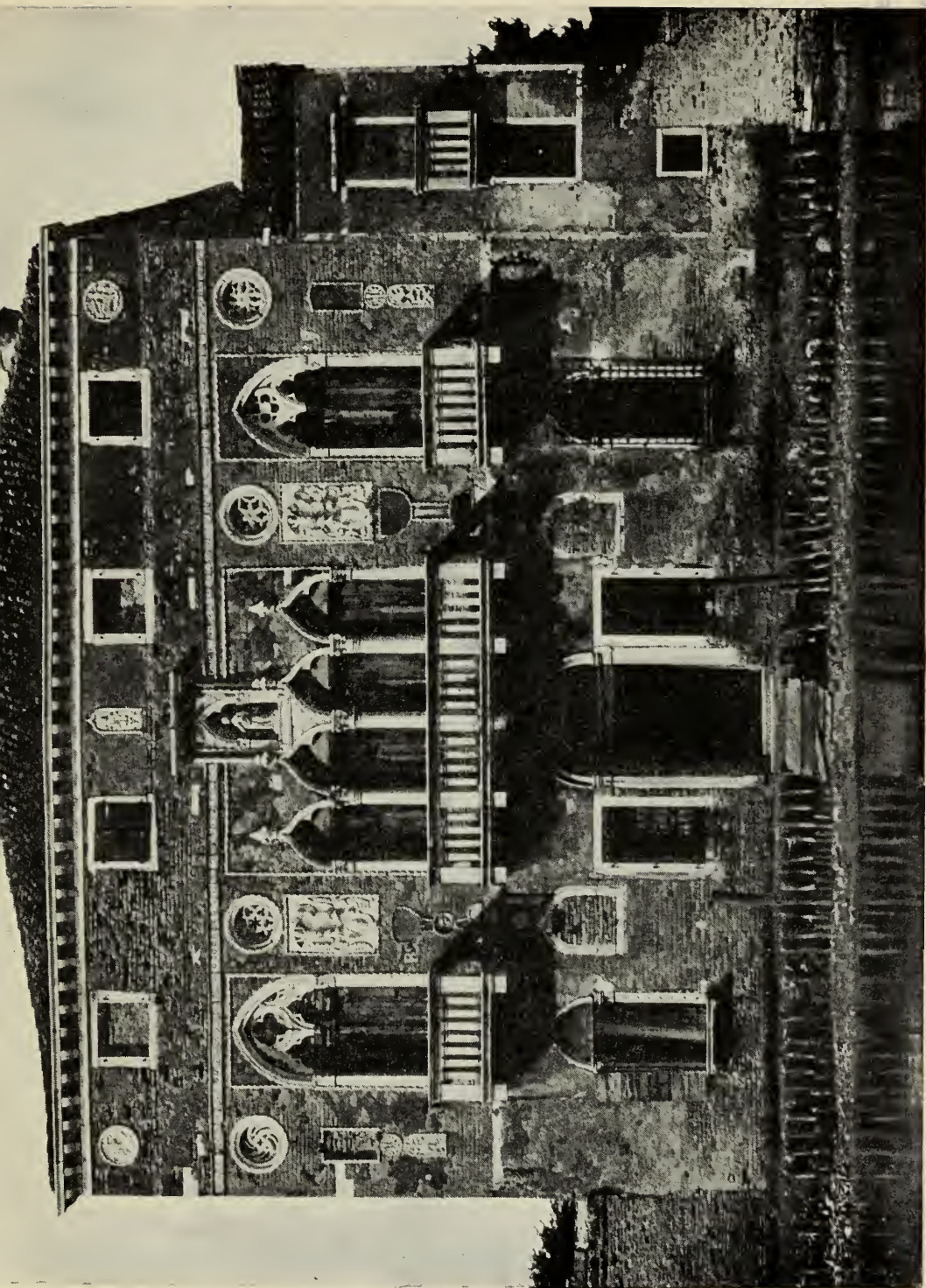
We have no documents of the very earliest period illustrating the disposition of the houses, but among a people so tenacious of its traditions, the documents of a later date may fairly be taken to throw some light on remoter times. These later documents make frequent mention of the *domus de statio*, or the patron's house, and the *domus a sergentibus*, or house of the client. In Roman cities we may remember that the house of the patron was surrounded by those of his clients, and we can understand that the case was the same in the Venetian estuary. The ground of the islands became the property of those who first built on it, and this, perhaps, explains why in Venice many passages, many *fondamenta*, many bridges, were, down to a late period, the property of the families whose names they often bore<sup>2</sup>; to the name of the family they almost always added the name of the district where the family dwelt. As in the country so in Venice, property was marked off by columns or terms.<sup>3</sup>

When the seat of government was moved to Rialto, the richer inhabitants began to build in stone. They brought their material from the mainland, as much of

<sup>1</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, pp. 348-351.

<sup>2</sup> This fact is met with in the mainland cities as well during the middle ages. The commune had only to provide for some of the main streets, the smaller alleys were maintained by private citizens.

<sup>3</sup> In the twelfth century the ground rent, *terraticum*, was paid to the ground landlord, the house owner drew the house rent, *casatico*, *pensio*; sales were effected on mortgage.



FOUNDATION PILES — PALAZZO DA MULA AT MURANO





it, that is, as had survived destruction by man and by time.<sup>1</sup> A more solid method of building began to prevail when brick could be procured from kilns<sup>2</sup> and stone from the quarries of Istria, Verona, and Monselice. But the majority of the houses retained their primitive simplicity in keeping with the austerity of prevailing manners.

The houses were low, with narrow windows few in number,<sup>3</sup> and protected by iron gratings. At the edge of the roof they had stone or wooden eaves (*revetenas*). From the height of the first floor the walls were supported on brackets (*barbacani*) or corbels (*mensole*) of wood, carrying the outer walls of the upper floors and stretching out like a roof over the road, so that in many of the *calli* the light hardly penetrated at all, as they were all but roofed in. Some houses had a portico on the ground floor, where goods could be stored; in front of others spread a stretch of land (*junctorium*) with its landing-steps, known later on as the *riva*, where boats could be moored; some again were accessible only by water.<sup>4</sup> In the middle of the courtyard was the cistern

<sup>1</sup> Among the ruins of the campanile which fell on July 14, 1902, bricks of Roman make were discovered. They probably came from Aquileia. Some of them were very firm in grain and bore the imperial mark of Antoninus Pius, *Imp. Anto. Aug.*, a formula noted by Mommsen in his *Corpus Inscriptionum*.

<sup>2</sup> In the fourteenth century, to meet the growth of buildings, the government encouraged the establishment of brick kilns. On January 20, 1327, the Great Council, *cum terra maximum defectum fornacium paciatur*, resolved to announce in *Sancto Marco et Rivoalto quod quicumque vult facere fornacem in Veneciis . . . debeat comparere*, etc. *Archivio di Stato, M. C., Spiritus*, p. 12. Another decree of March 12, 1331, concedes to everyone the right to sell bricks.

<sup>3</sup> Sansovino, F., *Venetia città nobilissima e singolare*, with the additions of Martinoni, Lib. IX. *Venetia*, Curti, 1663.

<sup>4</sup> "Et quando ire volebat ad ecclesiam cum scaula, ibat per rivum, aliam viam non habebat." *Arch. di Stato, Arch. di San Zaccaria, B. VII* (March, 1180).



(*pozzo*), formed of an ample reservoir under ground, quadrangular in form, puddled with clay, and with a stratum of sand to filter the rain water that was led from the roofs into the reservoir by the eaves and drain-pipes.<sup>1</sup> The *pozzo* frequently had as parapet (*vera*) some remains of an ancient temple, some fragment of a pagan altar, some magnificent capital or drum of a Roman column, on which they would carve allegorical symbols, ribbon patterns, or Byzantine crosses. Some houses had their oven and some, but very few, were supplied with underground drainage (*jaglacio* and *transjaglacio*). In front of the houses were stone benches (*banche de pietra*), sheds, and drain-pipes (*cani*) from the roof.<sup>2</sup>

Another peculiar detail of a Venetian house was the species of terrace-loggia (*sollario*), open on three sides and sometimes with windows, called a *liagò*, perhaps from the Greek *ἡλιακός* (solar). The *liagò* is thus described by Temanza: "It was an integral part of the old Venetian houses; there was a kind of loggia, open in front, but roofed and shut in on three sides. A small portico below it served as entrance, and there the staircase began. Ordinarily each house had only the ground floor and this loggia (*sollaio*). The word *sollaio* is still in use among the poorer people and especially among the fisher folk of the two *sestieri* of Dorsoduro and Santa Croce. As a rule, the *liagò* faced

<sup>1</sup> From 1322 to 1324 the government decreed the construction of fifty wells in fifty different districts, and intrusted the execution to the headmen of each *sestiere*, with power to spend about six thousand lire. The government saw to the purity of the wells, into which the people often flung *turpitudines*, *scovadulia*, and filth. Cecchetti, *La Vita*, etc. (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XXVII, pp. 28, 29).

<sup>2</sup> Saccardo, G. (l'Eremita), *I campanili de Venezia*, pp. 97, 112. Venezia, 1891.



A LIAGÒ and Outside Stair in the courtyard  
of the Palazzo Loredan at SS. Giovanni e  
Paolo (XIV and XV centuries)





due south,<sup>1</sup> so as to catch all the sun's rays." Besides the *liagò* we must mention the terraces, shut in between walls and called *corteselle*,<sup>2</sup> and the *allane*, which were originally hanging balconies, but later on became wooden loggias placed on the top of the roof for drying clothes. The floors of the rooms were made of *terrazzo*, scagliola, and the shutters opened out, and in the earliest times were occasionally made of slabs of stone, but only for churches or public buildings.

Galvano Fiamma (1340) in his chronicle, quoted by Muratori, is in error when he writes that in the early centuries chimneys were not used in Italian houses, — *non erant per domos camini ad ignem aut ulla caminata*. Muratori, calling attention to the error, demonstrates the antiquity of chimneys, but he is not sure whether the smoke issued through the walls or under the tiles.<sup>3</sup> It is quite certain, however, that our ancestors had fireplaces, not only in their kitchens, with the hood (*mappa*), the chimney (*buseno*), and chimney-stack, but also in their dwelling-rooms; and in ancient documents one continually finds the words *caminata* and *caminus magnus*.<sup>4</sup> The hoods were adorned with painting and sculpture, and so were the chimney-stacks, which, as Giovanni Villani<sup>5</sup> says, were both numerous, beautiful, and of varied form, — inverted cones, bell-shaped, supported on corbels, on ogee arches, on cubes, on tripods, vase-shaped, etc.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Temanza, *Antica Pianta*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Saccardo, G., op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Muratori, *Diss.*, XXV.

<sup>4</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 344, Vol. III, p. 17. In Venice the word *camini* must not be confounded with *caminata* or *portici*.

<sup>5</sup> *Cronaca*, Lib. XII, Cap. 123.

<sup>6</sup> Urbani de Gheltof, *I camini*. Venezia, 1892.



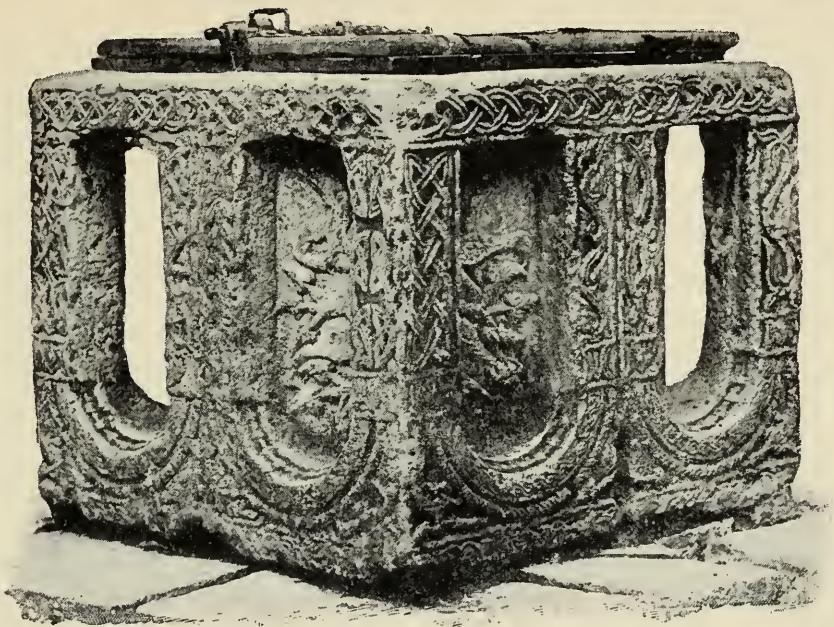
Nor were towers wanting in the city,<sup>1</sup> for as early as the ninth century the Chronicle of John the Deacon mentions the "eastern tower" of the Ducal Palace<sup>2</sup>; and in the thirteenth century we have notice of the Ca' Molin on the *Riva degli Schiavoni*, celebrated for its twin angle towers, *geminas angulares turres*, in which Petrarch lodged.<sup>3</sup> Some of these towers were turned into campanili—for example, the pentagonal tower of San Paternian and the tower of the Maddalena, both of them destroyed not so many years ago. In remote and turbulent times these towers were erected only for protection, especially in the Ducal Palace, but when peace was secured they became the graceful ornament of private dwellings or served as lodgings and were sometimes even used to hang out the washing. Castles with towers were to be found scattered over the mainland country. Some belonged to patricians and were used during the *villeggiatura*—for example Bajamonte Tiepolo's castle at Marocco; others were strongholds of the feudal nobility. But feudalism, even on the Venetian mainland, was not, as elsewhere, fierce and inhuman. Round the castles of San Zenone, Collalto, San Salvatore, Montegalda, Montebelluna, Montorio in the Veronese, Garda, Montalbano in Friuli, Fara in the Marches of Treviso, and so on,<sup>4</sup> fierce skirmishes and bloody fights

<sup>1</sup> Note the mosaics in the atrium of Saint Mark's which represent the building of the Tower of Babel, curious also for the figures of the masons.

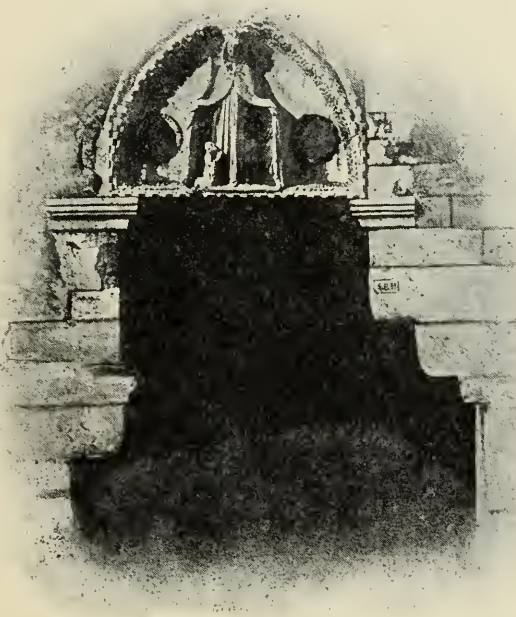
<sup>2</sup> John the Deacon, describing the secret visit of the Emperor Otto II to Venice, says that the emperor "in orientali turre se cum duobus suis retrudi et servari voluit."

<sup>3</sup> Petrarca, *Senil*, Lib. II, 3. In the plan of Venice of 1500, attributed to Jacopo de' Barbari, we see the ancient palaces of Venice with their *logge* on the ground floor, shut in by two wings like towers, where goods were discharged before being taken to the warehouse.

<sup>4</sup> In the tenth century one of the Othos gave to a Candiani the feudal jurisdiction of the castle of Musestre. From that time onwards many



(A)



(B)



(C)

A — WELL-HEAD in the Corte Battaglia at the Birri (XI century). B — Stone Brackets, Calle del Paradiso at Sa. Maria Formosa. C — Cross from the Campanile of S. Paterniano. (Archivio di Stato)





did not prevent the rise of populous and flourishing villages, sure sign of the protection extended to vassals.

After the Crusades had introduced new ideas, and conquests in the East had wrought a change in the simplicity of primitive manners, the internal fittings of the houses underwent a transformation. Domestic life developed, one might say, in an atmosphere or temperature of new perceptions and new wants, so that if one entered the house of a rich man<sup>1</sup> one would have found the rooms furnished less roughly than heretofore. The characteristic note was not so much sumptuousness as a careful choice of form at once solid and varied, which gave to each piece of furniture its appropriate beauty adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. Wood, copper, iron, were all employed for their proper ends without being overcharged with ornament and decoration.<sup>2</sup>

other patricians received similar donations. In the fourteenth century the castle of Valmareno was ceded to Marino Falier. But in Venice there was no question of feudal customs such as prevailed on the mainland. One of the few remains which still speak to us of feudal life in the Veneto during the middle ages is the castle of San Salvatore, belonging to the Counts of Collalto. In the early part of the thirteenth century the Collalto family acquired from the Bonaparte of Treviso the hill of San Salvatore, and there they erected a formidable castle encircled by a triple wall, with gates and drawbridges, battlements, towers, and machicolations. In the Gothic chapel, afterwards painted by Pordenone, are still preserved some frescoes of the trecento in Florentine style according to Cavallcaselle. Schlosser, on the other hand, recognises the hand of Tomaso da Modena (*Tom. da Modena und die Altere Malerei in Treviso*. Wien, 1898).

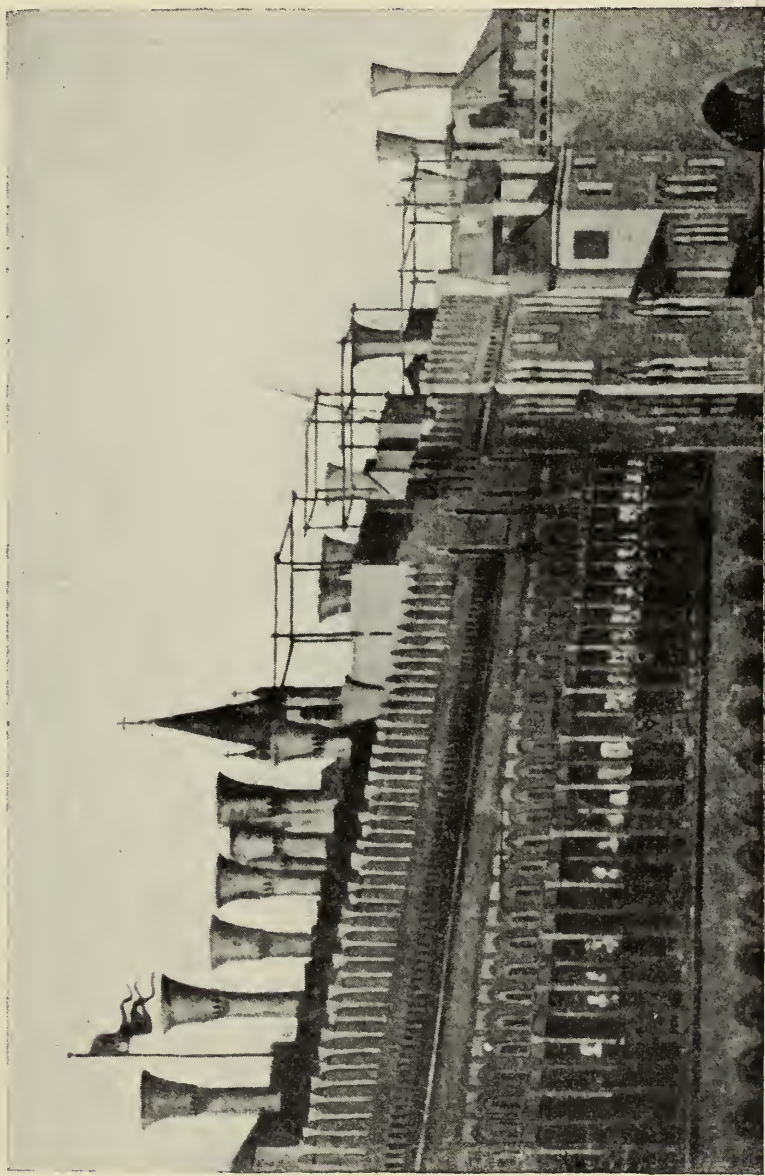
<sup>1</sup> A document of 1363, quoted by Gallicciolli (Vol. II, p. 17), mentions a house at Santa Maria Formosa which had *curiam, hortum, pontem, latrinas, anditum, porticum, studium quod nunc est teneum et puteum*.

<sup>2</sup> Sketches of antique household utensils, as preserved in palaces, churches, and institutions at the close of the eighteenth century, are to be seen in Grevembroch's collection at the Museo Civico (Raccolta Dolfín-Gradenigo). Giovanni de Grevembroch, a Venetian of German origin, was patronised by the noble family of Gradenigo of Santa Giustina. He died, at seventy-two years of age, in 1807.



Luxury began now to go hand in hand with simplicity, but had not yet reached the pitch of refinement and elegance. No traces remain of the interior arrangements of an ancient house if it be not in some few fragments of furniture, some wooden bracket or wrought-iron grille, some antique lock, or some household utensil. To help us to reconstruct the surroundings in which the intimate life of this early period was developed, we have only as a guide — far from eloquent but still trustworthy — the mosaics of San Marco.

As time went on, growing dominion and expanding commerce brought further innovations. Dwelling-houses were arranged with more spacious apartments. But of these houses the external aspect alone remains — where not destroyed by restorations; all the internal fittings, which would have spoken to us of the private domestic life of Venice, having disappeared. Had we been able to examine attentively the actual character of household furniture we might have gained a clear view of Venetian domestic habits, of the peaceful daily life of men we are accustomed to think of as clad in mail, in the thick of a battle, or dressed in their gorgeous robes of state. Some few remains of furniture, of fittings, of utensils, a document here and there, an inventory or two, allow us to guess at the beauty of the objects which adorned these early dwellings; but a more genuine picture is offered us by the paintings of the early Renaissance masters like Gentile Bellini, Carpaccio, Mansueti — artists who still retained the taste of the middle ages in their heart and in their eyes and who represented the rich and refined apartments of Venetian dwellings with that precision and loving fidelity of which they possessed the secret.



CHIMNEYS and Elevations — from Giovanni Bellini's picture  
“La Processione sulla Piazza di S. Marco”



The houses of the nobility prove that a certain refinement and elegance had already come into vogue, and the internal decoration of the chambers was no less graceful than the designs of the façades. In fact the delicacy of architectural tracery displayed in the marble facings finds its counterpart in the ceiling, the architraves, the doors—in short, in all the domestic fittings of the house. Cabinets, coffers (*arcelle*), trousseau chests (*albi de ligno*), cupboards of walnut, trunks, tables, were all adorned with foliated carving and ogival interlacings, with little spiral columns, arches, niches, and fretwork. The high-backed oak chairs (*cathedre*) over which they used to fling ample draperies,<sup>1</sup> the stools and seats before the fireplace, all had round or square cushions stuffed with feathers and covered in gold brocade or other rich fabrics.<sup>2</sup> Over the wide beds, with their feather mattresses (*plumacii*),<sup>3</sup> their linen sheets (*linteamina*) reaching to the ground, and silken bed-quilts,<sup>4</sup> rose canopies of fantastic form, some with curtains of foliated embossed velvet (*ricellus*)<sup>5</sup> and a starry firmament above ending in a kind of dome,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionn. raisonnè du mobil. français*, Vol. I, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Galli, *La mobilia di un canonico del secolo XIV* (published per nozze), p. 30. Pavia, 1899. Bertanza e Lazzarini, *Il dial. ven. fino alla morte di Dante*. Venezia, 1895.

<sup>3</sup> *Plumacii de pignolato vergato*. See Appendix, Doc. C, n. VIII, *Inventario di casa Dandolo* (1341).

<sup>4</sup> *Una cultra de cendato torto vermeio; Due culre de catasmilo* (coarse silk) *zalo*. *Inv. Dandolo*, cit.

<sup>5</sup> Ducange gives *Ricellus speties panni pretiosi*—perhaps *soprariccio*.

<sup>6</sup> *Leggenda dell' andata di Lodovico di Francia al Purgatorio* (Museo Civico, MSS. Correr, n. 1508). It is written in the vulgar tongue by a Venetian about the middle of the fifteenth century. The MS. is on parchment and is illustrated by forty-one coloured drawings, of which the last is the most remarkable. It represents the Virgin Mary, taken from a fresco



others with columns and carved capitals.<sup>1</sup> Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi gives us the following highly coloured poetical description of a bedroom : —

Molte cortine intorno a loro letti  
 Con capoletti sì ben lavorati,  
 Con più figure e caccie con diletta,  
  
 Che paion tutti vivi s' tu li guati,  
 Tanto son fatti con gran maestria,  
 Che per gran pregio si son comperati.  
  
 A dir la lor valuta par resia,  
 S' i' ti dicessi quel che costan loro,  
 Ma nel mio dir non ti dirò bugia :  
  
 Ben dugento milia ducati d'oro  
 Tengo per fermo queste cose vaglia.<sup>2</sup>

Near the bed stood the prie-dieu under the wooden shrine (*ancona*), with its little pinnacles of carved fret-work containing the black Byzantine Madonna on a ground of gold, or a rude picture from some early Venetian brush.

Among the paintings by Vittore Carpaccio, through whose masterly art both men and things reassume their actual life, there are two which show us two separate

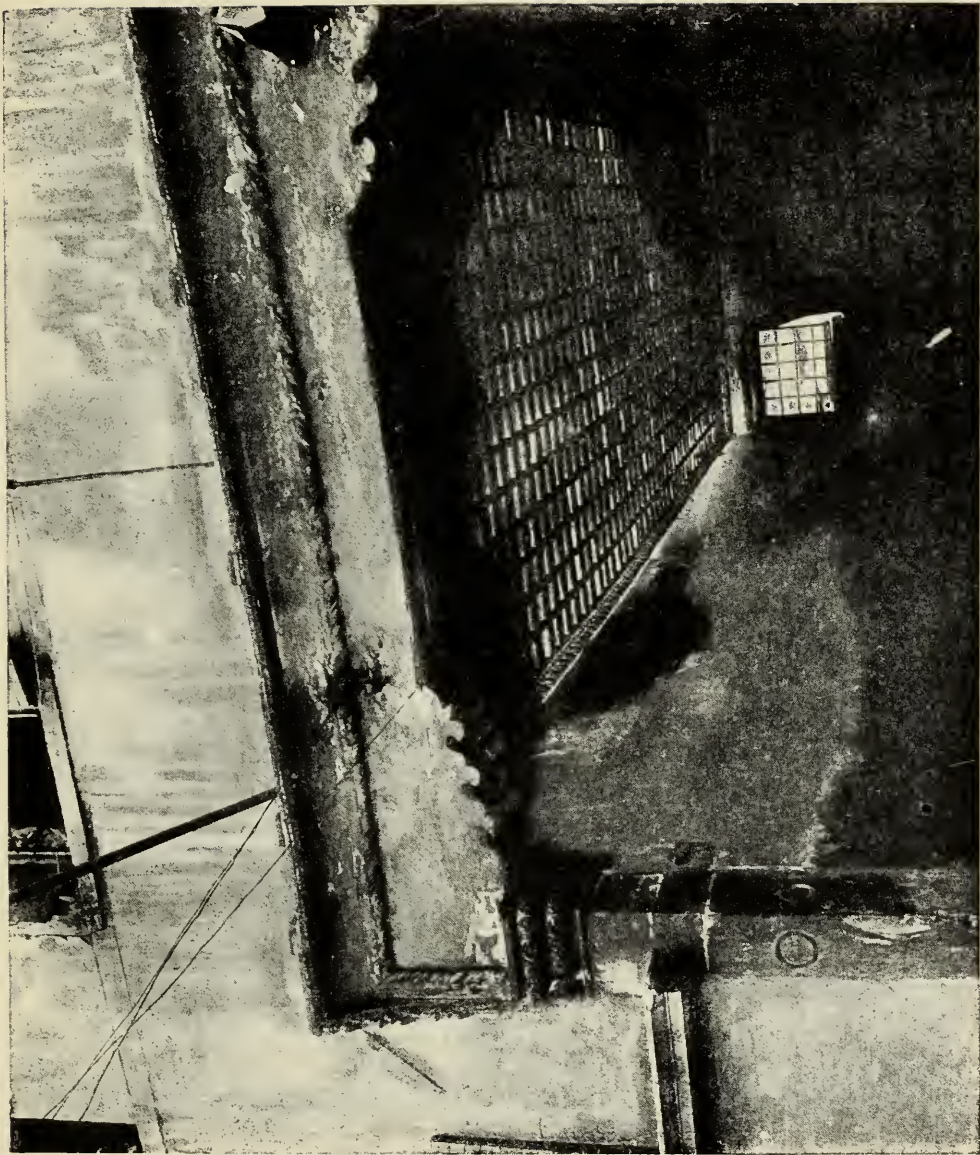
by Guariento in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, with the four verses wrongly attributed to Dante above her head :

L'amor che mosse già l'eterno Padre  
 Per figlia aver de sua deità trina  
 Costei che fu del suo fiol poi madre  
 De l'universo qui la fa regina.

Cfr. Frati, *Tradizioni storiche del Purgatorio di S. Patrizio* (in *Giorn. stor. d. lett. ital.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 46-79).

<sup>1</sup> See the mosaic in the atrium of San Marco, near the Capella Zen, representing the birth of Cain and Abel. One can get some idea of the interior of a chamber at this date from Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel at Padua.

<sup>2</sup> Rossi, V., *Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi*, etc., cit., p. 423.



Ceiling of the Palazzo Contarini dalla "Porta di Ferro" in the Salizada Sa. Giustina (XV century). Architect, Matteo Reverti



bedrooms. The imprint of the middle ages is still clearly visible in the style of the hangings and furniture, and yet the first touch of Renaissance art, just on the point of breaking away from Gothic, is diffused throughout the atmosphere. In Saint Ursula's dream, the sleeper, to whom appears the angel with the palm of martyrdom in his hand, lies there surrounded by objects which breathe an air of gracious placidity and refinement, serene by virtue of their owner's gentle blood. Two windows with roundels of glass, and with two pots of flowers on the sill, give light to the fair and orderly chamber.

In the other picture, the Nativity of the Virgin, the grace of the furnishings is not less evident. The alcove is hung with curtains; the bed has a rich coverlid and fine linen sheets. From the predella or dais on which the bed stands, descends a magnificent oriental carpet. The little cupboard, the architraves above the door, the architectural design of the ceiling and the walls display an exquisite mastery of art. And yet, if in the picture of Saint Ursula, in that atmosphere of serene colour and aristocratic refinement of form, the artist clearly intended to pourtray a patrician dwelling-place, it is certain that in the Nativity of the Virgin he intended to introduce us to a more modest household. From the bed the new-made mother, leaning her head on her hand, watches with quiet attention the women preparing the swaddling clothes and the bath for the new-born babe, while another woman is bringing her a basin of broth. The old man, Joachim, in one corner leans on his staff and contemplates the whole scene; further away two rabbits are quietly nibbling a cabbage leaf. Through the open door is a vista of rooms, the first of which is the kitchen with its ample hood



over the fireplace, where a serving-woman bends over a fowl she is plucking; the walls are adorned with dishes and pots of copper in orderly rows. Everything reveals the application to the uses of everyday life of an art which visibly displays the essential qualities of the period, — simplicity and strength.

A severe taste characterised all the adornment of the various chambers: carpets, gilt vases,<sup>1</sup> basins and spoons of silver of many shapes, candelabra,<sup>2</sup> *jocalia et argentariae pro usu domus*.<sup>3</sup> Some mosaics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the atrium of San Marco show us a table with couches about it resembling those of the ancient *trichnium*, and some horseshoe benches; on the table itself are knives, plates (*messori* or *mensori*), which at the opening of the trecento began to be made of majolica, cups with legs (*pladene*), and plain saucers.<sup>4</sup> For wine they used peculiar little flacons, glass tumblers being very rare even at a later date. Tumblers were usually made of pewter, as indeed were all the other vessels; only in the houses of the aristocracy were they of gold or silver.<sup>5</sup>

The kitchens were furnished with a number of utensils. We find the following names in inventories: *lavezi*, saucepans of copper, bronze, and stone; *calene*, ewers; *fresora* or *fersora*, frying-pans; *cogome*, coffee pots, buckets; *gratagazo*, graters; *spedi*, spits; *molet*, tongs; *paleta*, shovels; *bochali*, bronze water-jugs, basins; *cavedoni*, andirons; *tre pe*, trivets; *coldere*,

<sup>1</sup> The mosaics of the atrium of San Marco show us gilt cups of graceful form.

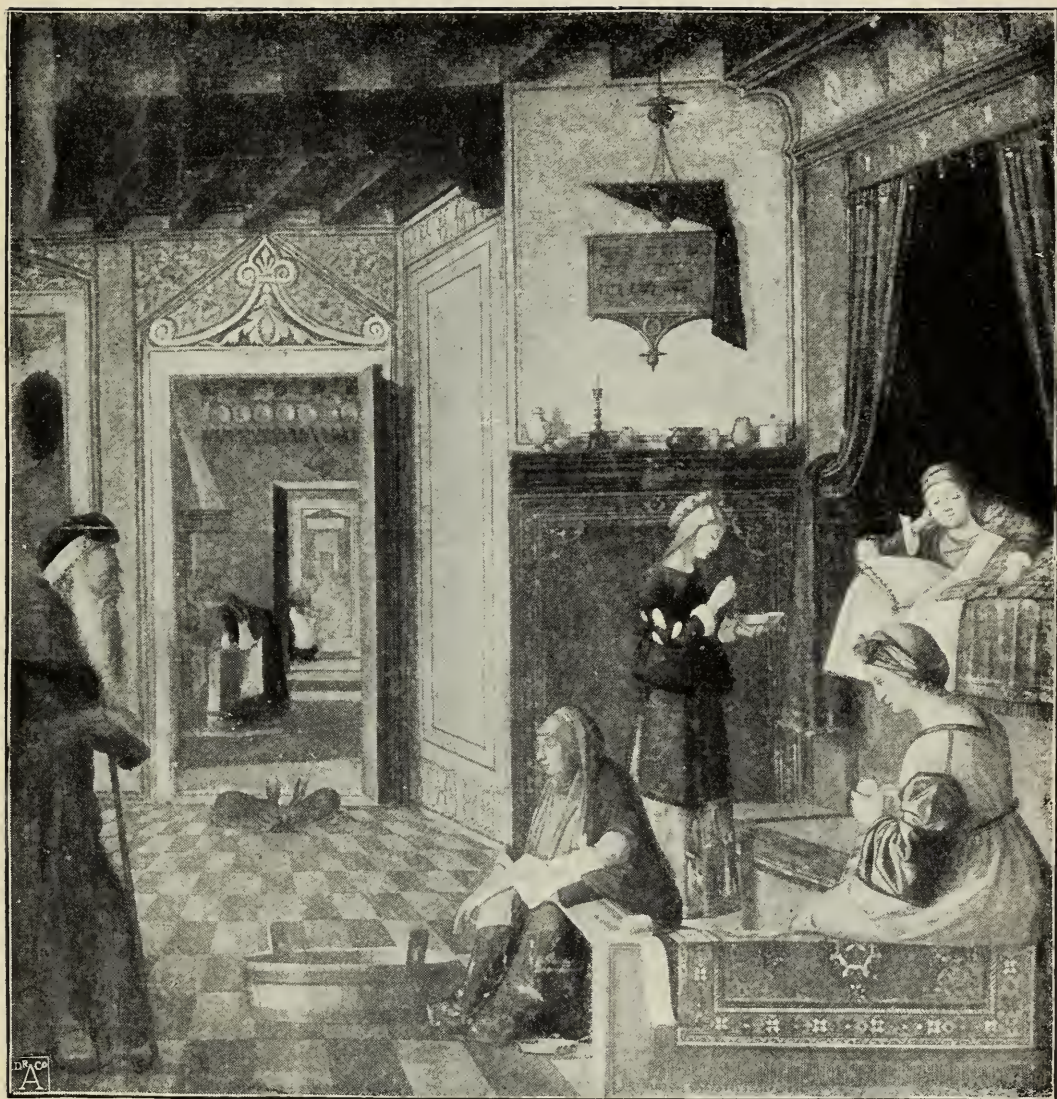
<sup>2</sup> See Doc. C in Appendix. Inventories of the fourteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Platene, mensori, tabulae ad comendendum invernicate*. Monticolo, *Capitolare dei pittori del 1271*, p. 348 (*Nuovo Arch. Ven.*, T. II, p. 348).

<sup>5</sup> Galli, *La mobilia di un canonico*, cit., p. 26.

N. Y. Sims



(Photo. Taramelli)

BEDROOM—from Carpaccio's  
“Nativity of the Virgin”





cauldrons; *segli*, pails; *panaroli*, rolling-pins; *albuol*, kneading-troughs; and so on.<sup>1</sup>

In the houses of the rich they had staircases of wood communicating from one floor to the other, with fret-work balustrades and carved ornamentation, painted and gilded, as in that splendid specimen of the early quattrocento now in the Museo Civico, which came from the house of the Dell' Agnella family at Santa Maria Materdomini.<sup>2</sup>

The oblong halls, formed like a crutch which had lost an arm (*sala a crozzola*), had roofs made of large, solid beams, painted and carved, and called *intelaradure alla tedesca*,<sup>3</sup> or else of gilded coffers studded with stars, with cornices of hanging arches, as in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, begun in 1346 and finished in 1382. Two old prints, one in the Biblioteca Marciana, the other in the Museo Civico, are the sole records of this sala, with its fresco by Guariento. It was destroyed by fire on December 20, 1577. Lionardo di Nicolò Frescobaldi, a Florentine, tells us that the house of Remigio Soranzo, who invited him to supper one evening in August, 1384, "seemed all of gold; there were many chambers which were simply one mass of gold and ultramarine." Peter, son of the King of

<sup>1</sup> The will of Paolo Barbo (August 28, 1325), which refers to an earlier will of March, 1277, published by Cecchetti, *La Vita dei Veneziani nel 1300 (Le Vesti)*, p. 119. Venezia, 1886. Cfr. Bertanza e Lazzarini, *Il dial. Ven.*, cit.

<sup>2</sup> A drawing by Bellini in the Louvre shows us a room with its beamed roof pierced by a wooden staircase.

<sup>3</sup> The roof of the central nave of San Giacomo dall' Orio belongs to the fourteenth century. It is made of wood and built like a ship's hull. Some roofs had tie-beams at intervals; above these beams, in a perpendicular line, depended another beam known as the *monaco*. See the churches of Santo Stefano and of the Misericordia. Caffi, *Sulla scultura in legno*, p. 14.



Portugal, was in Venice in 1428, and chroniclers report him to have said that the houses of the nobles "were not private houses, but palaces of princes and of crowned heads."<sup>1</sup>

But, as if to assert that riches and refinement were powerless to enervate the mind and the arm, they used to hang on the walls of their chambers the hoofs of wild boars, antlers of stags killed in the chase, the banners of conquered foes, and the armour in which time after time they had proved the nobility of their blood.<sup>2</sup>

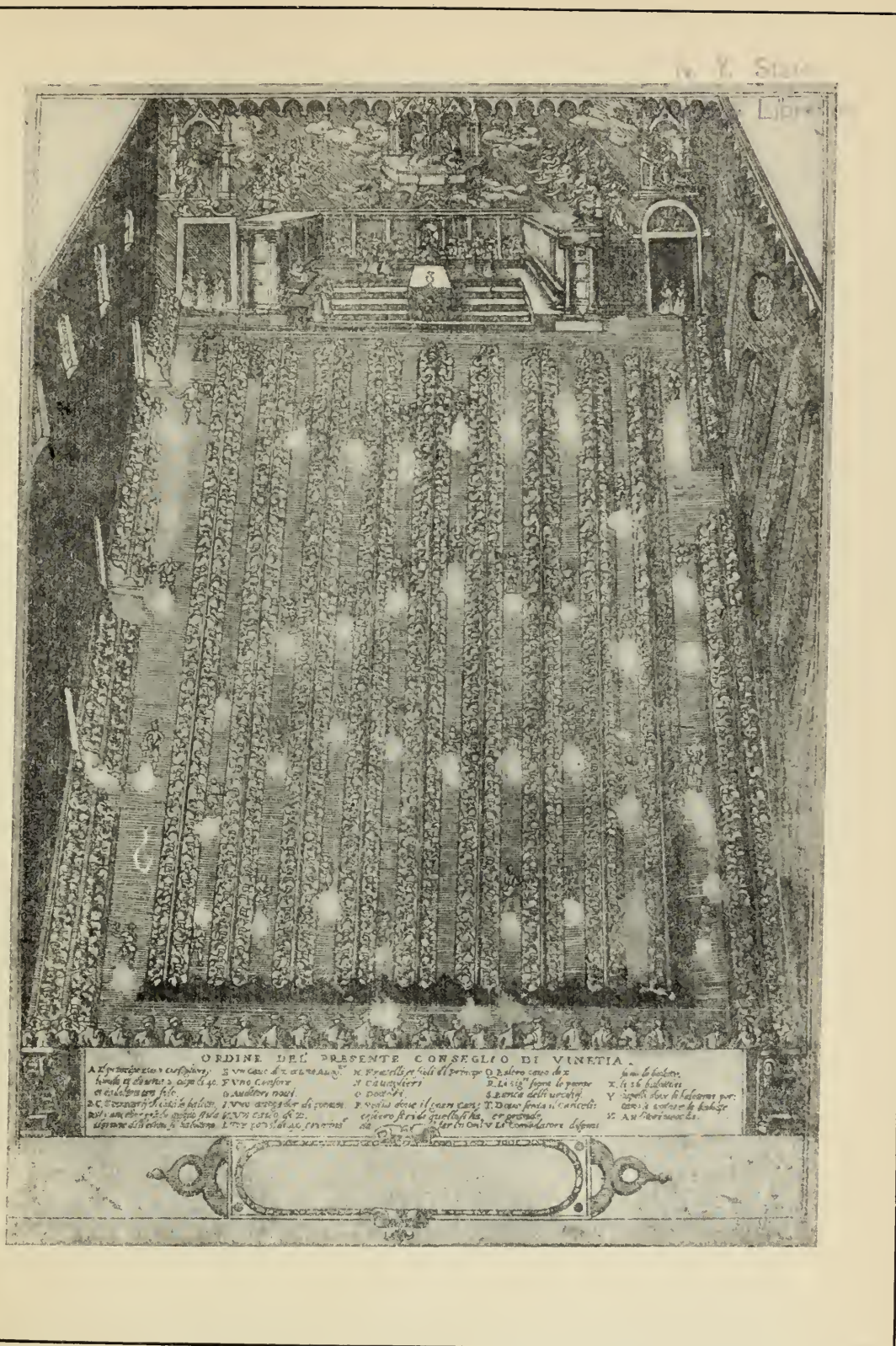
Round the entrance courtyard were large cellars, and the merchandise brought from the East was unpacked there, as if to show that commerce was no stain upon nobility, and that bales of cotton or cases of pepper went quite well with armour and trophies of war without dimming their glory.

The value of houses rose rapidly in a few years, as is proved by the valuation roll compiled first in the fourteenth century and then revised in 1425 by a special commission of six experts, notaries and government officials,<sup>3</sup> who brought to their task the greatest care. For example, in the *sestiere* of Castello alone the original estimates gave a value of 45,576 lire, while the estimate of 1425 gave 70,167 lire. On this point a chronicler remarks, "Seeing that this increase in estimated values may wake wonder in the mind of the reader, I must tell you that in all six *sestieri* of the city of Venice noble houses, magnificently adorned, more worthy to be styled palaces than private dwellings, and

<sup>1</sup> Filiasi, Vol. VI, *Saggio*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 396.

<sup>3</sup> Contento, *Il censimento della popol. sotto la Repub. Ven.* (*Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, T. XX, p. 15).



HALL of the Great Council — from an old engraving. (Museo Civico)





fitted in every way to lodge a mighty lord or an emperor, have recently been built.”<sup>1</sup> The annual rent of a house *per uxo de li gentilhomini* varied from fifty to one hundred and twenty ducats of gold.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of public broils, mid the din of battle, in the universal lack of education, we cannot refuse to admit the services rendered to the culture of mankind during the dark ages by monastic institutions. The monks were not only fairly educated in science and in letters, but they made great collections of books, of objects, of stuffs; and we can see from their inventories that besides cloth, quilts, sheets, handkerchiefs for the use of the brothers, they stored up abundance of church fittings, — chalices, patenas, reliquaries, figures in ivory and alabaster, rings with precious stones, robes of silk and cloth of gold, thuribles, crosses of enamelled silver, and candelabra. Nor did love of artistic objects remain imprisoned in the cloister. As manners grew milder, art was applied to the adornment of life and became a source of enjoyment for private citizens as well. They gradually began to collect antiquities and objects of artistic value and to turn their attention to the decoration of their homes. The notary Oliviero Forzetta, the owner of a veritable museum, was no solitary instance of a connoisseur, and in the inventory of his possessions, compiled in 1335, when Forzetta removed from Venice to Treviso, we have a document of the very highest importance. It records goldsmiths' work, cameos, pictures on panels, drawings, fragments of antique sculpture from San Vitale in Ravenna (*qui*

<sup>1</sup> Trevisan, *Cronaca*, cit., p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> Archivio di Stato di Milano. Correspondence of the ambassador of the Duke of Milan in Venice, Antonio Guidobono (February 17, 1462). Sanudo, *Cronachetta*, p. 31.



*sunt tagliati Ravennae Sancto Vitale*), medals, codices, books of philosophy and literature.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the private houses the city also contained lodging-houses, *albergarie* or *fondachi*, which the Republic granted to foreign merchants — Milanese, Tuscan, German, Turkish — for their use, with the right to live in them, to store their merchandise, and to govern them according to their own regulations, provided they assured to the government the payment of its dues.<sup>2</sup> Of this nature were the Case Nove at Rialto, assigned to the Tuscans, and the Fondachi of the Germans, the Turks, the Saracens, or Moors.

If in the early days of the city the houses were humble, the same cannot be said of the churches. The citizen who lived in discomfort himself lavished his wealth on the building of basilicas, on the adornment of altars dedicated to the saints,<sup>3</sup> and in this way called on his religion to sanctify the initial steps of his new fatherland. At Grado, on the site of the church of Sant' Eufemia, built by the Archbishop Nicetas in 456, the Patriarch Elias (561–586), with the help of Greek artificers, raised the cathedral and adorned it with

<sup>1</sup> Federici, *Memorie Trevigiane sulle op. di disegno dal 1100 al 1800*, Vol. I, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Some streets took the name of the foreigners who inhabited them; for example, *Calle degli Albanesi*, *Campo dei Tedeschi*. One street was called Giuffa (Djulfa) because it was occupied by Armenians from the city of Djulfa, on the Araxes, destroyed by Shah Abbas. As early as the thirteenth century many Armenians took up their abode in Venice, obtained trading privileges, their own quarter, and fondaco. Canestrini, *Sul commercio dei veneziani* (Arch. Storico Italiano, Appendice, T. IX, p. 338. Firenze, 1853). The Fondaco dei Tedeschi also dates back to the thirteenth century. Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig und die deutsch-venezianischen Handelsbeziehungen*, Stuttgart, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Also in other cities the internal decorations of churches were sumptuous; for example, the golden altar of Sant' Ambrogio at Milan dates from 835.

precious columns, rare marbles, and delicate mosaics. Equally beautiful were the baptistery and the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Grado.

Already by the year 461 the church and the baptistery of Torcello were celebrated for their splendour. According to the chronicles, the baptistery was adorned with columns of precious marbles and had a marble basin with symbolical animals wrought in metal which spouted water into a basin. The church was reconstructed in 697 and again in 864, and received a thorough restoration in 1008. No traces of the Benedictine nunnery, dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, now remain, but its splendour roused the admiration of Maria, niece of the Emperors Basil and Constantine, who, about the year 1000, left the gorgeous oriental court and came to Venice as the bride of Giovanni, son of the Doge Pietro Orseolo II.

About the middle of the seventh century the church of San Donato was built at Murano. It was, in large part, remodelled in 1100. In 820 the Partecipazi raised the abbey church of Sant' Ilario and San Benedetto on the western border of the lagoon.

The eleventh century saw the construction of the duomo and baptistery at Aquileia. It was renewed in the twelfth century. The cathedral at Caorle and the great church at Jesolo belong to the same date. Of the church at Jesolo the massive ruins are still standing in a district infested with malaria. A short distance off other mounds mark the site of the monastery of San Mauro.

The religious sentiment displayed itself on the islands of Rialto also in the great development of church building. Around the churches were grouped the houses, as if to fuse in one idea God and the family. Certain

chronicles, when recording the dates and founders of various churches, affirm that San Giacomo di Rialto (421) is the oldest church built in Venice; but modern criticism cannot accept this assertion regarding so remote and obscure an epoch. When the citizens had reclaimed a tract of land they would erect thereon a church, reserving to themselves the patronage and the nomination of the vicar. To the church was annexed gardens and vineyards, which Gallicciolli holds to have been their glebe. Each church had its tower, no longer for military purposes, but as a monument of religious devotion.

Among the most ancient towers, though frequently restored, we must mention those of Torcello and San Geremia, belonging to the eleventh century; of San Samuele, belonging to the twelfth; of San Barnaba and San Zaccaria, dating from the thirteenth; of San Canciano, the Frari, San Cassiano, San Polo, built in the trecento. At night, on the tops of some of these *campanili*, beacons were lit as guides for mariners. The *campanile* of San Marco, whose gilded summit reflected the rays of the sun far out to sea, served as a landmark by day.

The religious fervour which produced so many churches did not die away as time went on; and about the fourteenth century the government found itself forced to place a limit on the number of ecclesiastical buildings, as their erection destroyed *domos, terras, et possessiones*.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was the government itself that had set the example of religious zeal by raising notable buildings dedicated to divine service. Between 813 and 820, Giustiniano Partecipazio announced that on the orders of the Emperor Leo V, he was going to

<sup>1</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. II, p. 109.





The Campo di S. Paterniano as it was with the campanile erected in 999 and now pulled down





found a convent dedicated to San Zaccaria, and to adorn it with relics of the Prophet, some fragments of Our Saviour's garments, of the Virgin's robe, and other treasures.<sup>1</sup>

When the body of San Marco was secretly brought from Alexandria in 828, it found a temporary resting-place in the treasury of San Teodoro. The same Giustiniano Partecipazio at once bethought him of building a temple worthy of the evangelist. Death, however, overtook him and before closing his eyes he was merely able to indicate the site and determine the sum necessary for the building. The foundations were laid by his brother and successor Giovanni (829), and the fane was completed within three years (832). *Dompnus Johannes dux Sanctissimi Marci Evangelistae ecclesiam consecrare et digne beatum corpus in eadem collocare procuravit* — to quote the words of Johannes Diaconus. This church was partially destroyed by fire in 976, when the people rose against the Doge Pietro Candiano; it was restored by Pietro Orseolo (976-978). In 1063 it was reconstructed on ampler lines and received its present form of a Greek cross when Domenico Contarini was Doge. Internally and externally it must, at that time, have presented an aspect of severe simplicity with its bare walls, its arches of brick, the absence of marble veneering, mosaics, galleries, balustrades, cusps, shrines, tabernacles — of all adornment in short. In 1071 Contarini's successor, Domenico Selvo, covered the walls with mosaic and other ornament and the church began to assume the aspect we admire so much to-day.

The Venetians, who enriched the new shrine with all the sumptuousness that art permitted, were inspired not

<sup>1</sup> Archivio di Stato, *Codice Trevisano*, p. 35.

merely by religious zeal, but also by the highest interests of the State. They therefore resolved that the head of the State should enjoy the undivided patronage of the basilica not only in all that concerned the fabric, but also in regard to the lay and ecclesiastic ministers. No office pertaining to the basilica of Saint Mark's could be filled except by permission, order, and decree of the Doge — *solus Dominus Patronus et verus gubernator Ecclesiae Sancti Marci*. The authority of neither Pope nor Patriarch was above that of the Doge. San Marco represented the State and was, therefore, to be purely Venetian, exempt from all sacerdotal influence. As early as 979 Tribuno Menio declared the basilica to be the private chapel of the Doges — *libera a servitute Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae*. As a layman the Doge could not personally exercise the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but for all that concerned the divine offices he, by express delegation, transferred his authority to the dean, the *Primiciero*.

With a view to preserving and adorning in every possible way this building, which was, so to speak, the sacred ark or palladium of the race, the most honourable magistracy next to the dukedom, the procuratorship of San Marco, was created, possibly in the ninth century. The procurators were intrusted with the care and the administration of the church. The number of procurators was gradually increased till in 1442 they amounted to nine in all. They were divided into three groups: the *Procuratori de supra ecclesiam Sancti Marci*, to whom were intrusted the care of the basilica and the piazza; the other two were called *de ultra* and *de citra*; they administered legacies and assumed wardships on "this side" and on "the other side" of the Grand Canal. They were lodged

in the piazza of Saint Mark and gave their name to the Procuratie.

But sumptuous magnificence was not confined to sacred buildings only. Public edifices gradually began to assume this characteristic, and first among them the home of the government. Hard by the temple of San Teodoro the Doge Agnello Partecipazio laid the foundations of the Ducal Palace in 811. After the fire of 976 Pietro Orseolo I began the reconstruction which was carried to a conclusion in 1006 by Pietro Orseolo II, who in 998 had already received the Emperor Otto II as a guest in the palace. In 1105 the palace was burned a second time, in the reign of Ordelafo Falier, but was so speedily rebuilt that in 1116 the Emperor Henry V was lodged in it. It must have presented the appearance of a mediæval stronghold, with its flanking towers, its crenulated walls, and fosse with drawbridges.<sup>1</sup> When the threat of foreign invasion and the danger of internal tumult died away, porticoes and loggias took the place of walls and towers, and under the Doge Sebastiano Ziani (1172-78) the whole palace was renewed and enlarged — *renovavit et auxit*, to use the words of Dandolo's Chronicle. In 1202 the Seigneur de Ville-Hardouin declared the building to be *mult riche et biaux*.<sup>2</sup> With the lapse of time the Venetians grew more and more determined that the palace should be worthy of the rulers of so great a State.

In 1340 the Sala del Maggior Consiglio was enlarged and decorated at a cost of 8500 ducats, *non comprendendo le pitture et ori*, which were estimated at another 2000

<sup>1</sup> Paoletti, *L'architettura e la Scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia*, Part II, p. 153. Venezia, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire ou chronique du Seigneur Geoffroy de Ville-Hardouin*, etc. Lion, Rouille, 1601.



ducats.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the lagoon façade was reconstructed, along with the first seven bays of the portico on the piazzetta. In 1400 they resolved to complete Sala del Maggior Consiglio, “quia est honor nostri domini.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1409 the Doge's apartments were taken in hand, — “ita parvum et strictum quod in illo vix potest stare, quod est in magno incomodo suo.” At the same time they altered the “banchi porticus ubi stat ducissa . . . omnes fragidi et devastati, quod est cum magna deformitate Palacii.”<sup>3</sup> A few years later it was resolved to complete the piazzetta façade of the palace, and on this topic Francesco Sansovino says that in 1423 the Senate, on the accession of Francesco Foscari to the dukedom, resolved to enlarge the palace and to make it worthy of so noble a piazza and so great a city. In March, 1424, they began to pull down all that remained of the old palace built by Sebastiano Ziani.

Worthy companion to the Ducal Palace, where the wisdom of the Senate watched over the destinies of the State, was that other vast edifice wherein they built their ships and forged the weapons that were to bring them riches and conquered territory. The first ships which sailed to spread the name of Venice afar were designed in the numerous yards which were scattered about among the islands. In 1104, on the island Gemine, in the eastern part of the city, hard by the castle of Olivolo, a large tract of land and water was enclosed by walls and towers, and there, under the open sky, they built ships for trade and for war. The place was called *arzana*, and

<sup>1</sup> Archivio di Stato, *Spiritus*, p. 113 (December 28, 1340). Caroldo, *Cronaca*, MS. in the Marciana (Cl. VII, St. 128), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., M. C., *Leona*, p. 106 V° (July 22, 1400).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 181 V° (April 12, 1409).



THE ARSENAL, from the plan attributed  
to Jacopo de' Barbari





among the many conjectures as to the derivation of the word the most probable is that which finds its etymology in the Arab word *darsenaa*, which still exists in the word *darsena*, and means a basin of water.

The arsenal was finished in 1155, and was restored in 1303 with ample workshops, wide basins, just as Dante saw and sung it. But the old arsenal failing to meet the growing needs of the Venetian maritime power, the government from time to time enlarged this building, round which is concentrated the glory and the splendour of Venetian history.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cason, *Forze militari* (in *Venezia e le sue lagune*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 94). After the first enlargement in 1303 there was a second under the Doge Giovanni Soranzo (1312-1329), a third between 1325 and 1473, a fourth about 1539, and a fifth in 1564.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CONSTITUTION

**I**F we wish to get a clear view of the manners, customs, and private life of a people, a study of their form of government and of their laws is necessary.

The earliest form of political life in the lagoon islands was moulded by ancient Rome ; it received additions from the institutions of foreign peoples who successively descended on Italy, and was modified by the special conditions of the place itself.

The mention of “maritime tribunes” made by Cassiodorus compels us to inquire first of all who these tribunes were.

The accredited hypothesis<sup>1</sup> is that the tribunes were inferior Gothic officials invested with military authority, and it seems that the Venetian tribunes must have been military officials intrusted with the defence of the growing community. When the Greek empire succeeded the Goths, the Greeks, who maintained armies in Italy at least down to the sixth century, continued the office of tribune in the hierarchy of *duces*, *magistri militum*, and *tribuni*, whose duty it was to see to the defence of places of minor importance.

Some chronicles state that the tribunes were elected annually by the people from among the ancient noble (*anteriores*) families, which on that account were called

<sup>1</sup> Hegel, *Storia della costituzione dei Municipi Italiani*, T. IV.

*tribunizie*; but we do not think this statement can be accepted. The privileges of the aristocracy had no legal basis till much later, when the Great Council passed its restrictive measures; and that political revolution, the closing of the Great Council (1296), would not have been necessary had there already existed in the State a close caste which held in its hands the direction of affairs. It is probable that the people who from various districts of the mainland came together in the Venetian estuary brought with them their ancient traditions and their own special forms of administration, and we must look for the origin of the tribunes in the *equites* and centurions who composed the municipal magistracy in the various mainland cities. Those offices were not hereditary under the Roman constitution, nor were they in the islands of the lagoon. Further, we must remember that the asylum of the lagoons in process of time doubtless served as a refuge for Goths, Lombards, and Franks, as each in turn was defeated and expelled, just as it had served for the Veneto-Romans; and in the earliest centuries of the Republic we see families of Gothic, Lombard, or Frankish origin taking their place, in the government of the State, side by side with older families of purely Italic blood.

Unbounded freedom is never safe; it almost always degenerates into license. When, under stress of circumstances on the mainland, the temporary asylum of the lagoons was gradually developed into a permanent home, we may be sure that the attention of the fugitives, who represented all that remained of so many famous Roman *municipia*, was early devoted to the construction of a government sufficiently organised to secure justice at home, sufficiently strong to protect the growing

community from external attack. Accordingly the primitive *tribuni marittimi*, being proved inadequate to the growing needs of the State, gave place to tribunes elected yearly, for the most part, in each lagoon island and in each centre of population. The tribunes themselves soon felt the need for meeting together to discuss the common interests of the State, and thus gave rise to the *consociazione*, the germ of the famous commune of Venice, — *Comune Venetiarum*.

As long as Padua and Oderzo, though undoubtedly decaying, still maintained, in the Greek *duces*, a representative of the empire and of Roman traditions as well as a bulwark against Lombard invasion, it is to be supposed that the magistrates of the lagoon islands referred to the Greek *duces* in all that affected their government; though the growing activity of Venetian life was concentrated on sea traffic and industries. But when the Greeks finally disappeared from the Italian mainland (641), the islands were not slow to feel the need for closer unity among themselves in the administration of public affairs.

It may be that at this period some among the tribunes were invested with power over the others, and took the title of *maggiore*, but this conjecture is not confirmed by any documentary evidence. It is certain, however, that little more than half a century after the disappearance of Greek dominion from Oderzo, the lagoon population found itself obliged to create a single head of the State, a Doge, whom the people called *doxe*, or *dux*, a title retained with slight modifications both in the common speech of the Venetians and in their relations with foreign powers. This new institution, destined to give greater force and cohesion to the State, was intended to remedy the injury wrought by discords



among the tribunes who had not always known how to defend the lagoons either against the attack of the Lombards who came down the rivers in their boats, nor yet from the ravages of Istrian, Liburnian, and Dalmatian pirates who ravaged the ill-protected estuary.

The first Doge, Paoluccio Anafesto, was elected in 697 at Heraclea, where a general assembly of all the Venetian nobility, people, and clergy took place. It has been observed that when recounting this event the chronicles name the people before the archbishop and the clergy. This indicates not only the high position held by the people, but also breathes the very spirit of the Venetian constitution in which the clergy, even before the year 1000, were kept in rigid subjection to the civil administration, even, some say, in matters spiritual.<sup>1</sup> But this conclusion is open to grave doubts, even though it has the support of Andrea Dandolo,<sup>2</sup> following whom we should be obliged to admit that the clergy from the very beginning of the dogeship were subject to the civil tribunals, and that synods were held and prelates elected by order of the Doge, that such elections were made by the clergy and people together, and that the prelates received from the Doge both investiture and induction. The conclusions of more recent students<sup>3</sup> appear more reliable; they accept the point of view advanced by Sandi and hold that the State of Venice, at least in the earlier period, while maintaining inviolate its full rights in matters temporal, assumed an attitude of great respect and even of

<sup>1</sup> Monticolo, *I manoscritti e le fonti della Cronaca del Diac. Giovanni* (in the *Bullettino dell' Ist. Stor. It.*, n. 9, p. 316. 1890).

<sup>2</sup> *Cronaca*, Cap. I, p. I, col. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Rossi, Ag., *Studi di st. politico-ecclesiastica anteriore al mille*. Bologna, 1901.



protection towards the priesthood.<sup>1</sup> In fact even if the right of the Doge to grant investiture to the patriarch and bishops of Venice<sup>2</sup> is proved by the testimony of antiquity, the proofs of further ducal rights are either absent, or weak, or even negative. It is therefore impossible to accept the evidence of Dandolo as absolute and beyond discussion, and still less can we wrest the words of his chronicle to a conclusion that is altogether too modern in its character.<sup>3</sup>

The nobles, the clergy, and the people all took part in the election of the first Doge. This is a notable point, for it proves on the one hand that the State had reached independence *de facto*, if not *de jure*, while on the other it establishes the direct participation of the people in the sovereign power. There are those who hold that even from the first the share of the people in the election of a Doge was illusory, or at least highly limited, because the phrases of the Cronaca Altinate, and of Dandolo, *laudatus est* and *laudacione populi*, etc., indicate merely a right to approve, not to vote. But if the people had possessed only an illusory or limited participation in sovereignty, there would have been no need gradually to curtail and finally to destroy the rights of the people.

We find an example of a genuine and regulated exercise of the popular voice in 960. When the son and consort of Doge Pietro Candiano III, after rebelling against his father, was defeated and banished, the bishops, the lower clergy, and the *comune dei cittadini* met of their own accord and took an oath never to recognise the outlaw as Doge, neither during his father's lifetime nor after his demise.

<sup>1</sup> Sandi, *Principi di st. civ. della repubblica di Venezia dalla sua fondazione sino al 1700*, Vol. I, p. 180. Venezia, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Rossi, *Ag.*, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

There is no precedent for such an occurrence as this solemn meeting of both clergy and people acting as the political authority and deliberating on an affair of State of such importance.<sup>1</sup> But both clergy and people forgot their oath, brought back the outlaw in triumph, and acclaimed him as Doge. In order to render the constitution more stable and at the same time freer, a council was appointed to assist the Doge, who could undertake nothing without its consent.<sup>2</sup> By such a step the Venetians endeavoured to curtail the ducal power and to secure a more liberal colour for the constitution. The convocation of the whole population of Venice for the election of a Doge recalls both the *comitia* of ancient Rome and the meeting of the freemen among the Lombards. Certain it is that such assemblies were foreign to Greek custom—a point which calls for attention from those who are studying Venetian history. For if the people had preserved this sovereign right to

<sup>1</sup> Gfrörer, XXI. That the people were convened upon important affairs of State is proved by documents and chronicles. For example, under the dukedom of Maurizio Galbaio (764–787), Dandolo says (Lib. VII, Cap. XII), “*Venetorum populi et Cleri Synodus adunata, assistentibus Duce et Patriarcha, Obelerium clericum filium, Hencageli Tribuni mathemauensis sedis praedictae Episcopum laudavit, et laudatus a Duce investitus, et intronizatus, a Patriarcha quoque consecratus est XI Ducis anno.*” Jaffé (*Regesta Pontificum*, p. 266. Berlin, 1851), for the year 876, in the reign of Pope John VIII, says, “*Delto episcopo significat de lite inter Petrum, patriarcham Gradensem et ejus suffraganeos. Mandat, ut quatuor quae praecedunt epistolas Venetiam perferat, ibique in conspectu totius ecclesiae et populi legendas curet.*” On another occasion, when they wished to prohibit traffic in slaves, the Maggior Consiglio met under the presidency of the Doge and in the presence of the patriarch, the Bishop of Olivolo, and all the other prelates of the province, *astante in eorum praesentia magna parte populi, majores videlicet, medioeres et minores*, that is, nobles, citizens, and people, and voted to forbid the said traffic. (Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Rep. Ven.*, Vol. I, p. 256. Wien, 1856.)

<sup>2</sup> Gfrörer, XXI.

dispose of themselves, it is certain that in the period preceding the election of the first Doge the tribunes must have shared their authority with the citizens in some shape or other, possibly through the action of a council of heads of families, or of a general assembly summoned for special purposes, such as the approbation of laws or the imposition of taxes.

These facts throw some light on the social life of the early Venetians, and the smallest ray is of high value in the general obscurity of the period. The election of the Doge, whatever may have been its full import, is at least a proof of common sense and of patriotism. It is rare to find a revolution of this sort carried through without a violent shock to the social structure; hardly ever have the people voluntarily renounced their sovereign rights in order to concentrate them in the hands of a single individual.

The attributes of ducal authority must, at first, have been vaguely defined, although Dandolo thus rehearses the position of the Doge. *Decreverunt*, he says, *omnibus Ducem presse, quiequo moderamine populum sibi subditum gubernaret*.<sup>1</sup>

The Doge was elected for life. His symbols of sovereignty were the sword, the sceptre, and the throne. Apparently the whole administration was in his hands, and abuses might easily arise which gave frequent occasion to disorders. It would seem, however, that neither the forms, nor the functions, nor the spirit of the old tribunitian administration had completely disappeared, for even after the election of the first Doge we find tribunes

<sup>1</sup> Even in the later coronation oaths (*promissioni*) no mention is made of the military or naval command. It seems that originally the command belonged to the Doge, but was subsequently transferred to the *Maggior Consiglio*.



in existence who, though subject to the supreme ducal authority, still administered justice in the various islands. The inhabitants of the islands had a right of appeal from the tribunes to the Doge, who was considered as the fountain of justice in the State, whose duty it was to handle *sapienter et onorifice Veneticorum causam in omnibus*.<sup>1</sup> We must not think, however, that the tribunes were in any sense a branch of the administration intermediary between the Doge and the nation.

In 737 we have a further demonstration of the will of the people. The office of Doge, elected for life, gave way to the annual office of "the Master of the Soldiery," the *magister militum*.<sup>2</sup> This was an office well known at Ravenna and in southern Italy under the Greek rule, but in the lagoons it implied more especially the defence of the estuary. From this fact we may conclude that the tribunes had never willingly renounced their judicial and administrative functions, and that the people, especially those of the southern lagoon, were far from content at having concentrated all authority in the hands of a Doge resident in Heraclea. When five years later the lagoon population returned once for all to the ducal form of government, two important modifications were introduced. One was to give the Doge two tribunes<sup>3</sup> as assessors, — the germ of the later *Consiglieri ducali*; the other, to remove the seat of government from Heraclea to Malamocco, on the sea margin of the lagoon, a point less open to attack from the mainland and more central for the whole lagoon community.

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Diacono, *Chr.*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that the *magistri militum*, etc., existed contemporaneously with the doges and that during the *sede vacante* they exercised the ducal rights.

<sup>3</sup> In the reign of Domenico Monegario (756).



Under the new regime the *Gastaldi ducali*<sup>1</sup> took the place of the earlier tribunes in all that concerned the government of the lagoon communes, and under them came subordinates, the *missi de palatio*, charged with the exaction of tribute and quit-rents due to the fisc; later on were added the *giudici*, the *ministeriali*, the *decani*, and the *ripari*, who drew up the judicial findings and saw to their execution. The *boni homines* and the council *rogatorum* were charged with the interpretation of the law, and if any serious dispute arose, the people had the right to appoint arbitrators. In the twelfth century the *capi contrada* and the *capi sestieri* were intrusted with the maintenance of public order.

Clearly, then, Venice was already a State well organised and provided with securities for civic life; but it is an extraordinary thing that we find no trace of autocratic authority.<sup>2</sup> The great Pope, Hildebrand, was justified when he declared that the spirit and the independence of ancient Rome had come to life again in Venice. We must here observe that the period between the tenth century and the Crusades is remarkable in the civil history of Venice, for it shows us the State already absolutely freed from any political dependence on the Greek empire; ecclesiastical dependence had also disappeared, and the Greek Saint Theodore, the patron of the early Republic, was replaced by the Evangelist Saint Mark, whose legend floated over the islands of Rialto.

<sup>1</sup> The Gastaldi had a wide jurisdiction; for example, in 1111 Domenico Canovario, son of the late Domenico Canovario, of Sant' Isaia, gives a receipt to Angelo, son of the late Domenico Orso of San Bartolomeo, *de quatuor libris denariorum quas mihi dare debuisti de quibus multociens supra te proclamavi, et ante nostrum gastaldum et alios bonos homines ad rationem conduxi*. Archivio di Stato, Arch. di San Zaccaria, Pergamene Estere B<sup>a</sup>. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Crotta, *Memorie storico-civili*, etc., p. 47. Venezia, 1818.

In the year 828 two Venetian merchants, Buono of Malamocco and Rustico of Torcello, came to Alexandria, where lay the body of Saint Mark, jealously guarded by the Saracens. These two managed to steal the precious remains, and in order to avoid search by the custom-house officers, they carried them on board their ship in a basket filled with pork, which Mussulmans hold in horror. They spread their sails and brought to Venice the venerated relics, for which was presently built that glorious sepulchre, the basilica of San Marco. The evangelist, either in human form or as a lion, became the sole symbol of Venice.<sup>1</sup>

At the period we are discussing the Adriatic was commanded by the ships of Venice, and Venetian

<sup>1</sup> Nothing authentic is known about the earliest use of the lion of San Marco as the ensign of the Republic. The evangelist's lion, with all its attributes, is not to be met with earlier than the fourteenth or perhaps the very end of the thirteenth century; it is therefore improbable that the Venetians adopted the winged lion as their symbol earlier than the trecento. At the Museo Civico in Venice we have a high relief representing a lion issuing from the waves, with nimbus, wings, and the closed Gospel between its paws. This has erroneously been attributed to the year 1000 and described as the oldest known symbol of the Republic. Neither the lion on the door of Sant' Apollinare, which seems very ancient, nor the one preserved in the Archivio di Stato, can be placed earlier than the fourteenth century (Urbani, Dom., *Il nuovo leone al Museo*, in the *Bollettino d'arti*, etc., anno I, p. 95. Venezia, 1877-78). During the fifteenth century the banners of the Republic bore a cross. On Venetian coins we find the evangelist in human form as early as the twelfth century. The lion without wings and without the Gospel appears for the first time on the silver *soldo* of Francesco Dandolo (1329-1339); with nimbus, wings, and book, on the *tornese* of Andrea Dandolo (1342-1354). That curious representation of the lion, full face, crouching, with nimbus, wings displayed, and the hind paws holding up the open Gospel, was adopted on the *gazzetta*, a silver coin of the value of two Venetian *soldi*, first coined in 1538 by the Doge Andrea Gritti. This form of the lion is known as the *moleca*, from its resemblance to that kind of crab which in Venetian dialect is called *moleca* (*cancer moenas*). Every public building in Venice and the Dogado was marked by the lion of San Marco.

influence and even Venetian dominion took the place of Greek rule in Istria and Dalmatia. Both of these countries, though retaining their own laws, were, in the year 1000, subjected to the maritime jurisdiction of Venice by the Doge Pietro Orseolo II, who was acclaimed Duke of Dalmatia and recognised as such by the Emperor Henry II in a diploma of 1002 in which the Doge is styled *Dux Veneticorum et Dalmatinorum*.<sup>1</sup>

The poverty of the lagoon district was a leading factor of Venetian enterprise and strength. Venice rose to a marvellous height of power in the teeth of difficulties and obstacles. Their home had cost the Venetians too dear, too much had they suffered, fought, rejoiced, there in the heart of their swamps, to allow us to credit that in 1222 the Doge Ziani really dreamed of transferring the capital of Venice to Constantinople, and that the proposal was actually advanced in the Great Council and lost by a single vote. The best authorities make no mention of the episode, and if, perchance, the idea did cross the minds of some and was even discussed in the Council, we may take it that it was rejected at once and rightly.

Meantime, in the internal management of the State, there had come about a change of great importance which materially helped to mould the constitution and laid the first foundations of aristocratic authority. On the violent death of Doge Vitale Michiel II, in 1172, it was resolved to crush, once for all, both the arbitrary power of the Doge and the sanguinary outbursts of the people. And here we come upon the real origin of the Great Council, that instrument by which the State was secured in her freedom and material prosperity. The violent acts of some of the Doges proved that the councillors

<sup>1</sup> Musatti, *La st. politica di Venezia*, p. 38. Padova, 1897.



and citizens invited (*pregadi*) to assist the head of the State, who had been instituted under the gentle rule of Domenico Flabanico, in 1032, were not sufficiently powerful to hold a headstrong sovereign in check. It was accordingly provided that for the future two nominators for each *sestiere* should, on Saint Michael's day of each year, appoint four hundred and eight citizens, nobles or plebeians, who should constitute the *Maggior Consiglio*, in which were concentrated the powers and rights of Doge and people alike.

The Great Council was charged with appointment to all other councils and magistracies, and with the preparation of all subjects to be laid before the general assembly of the State. The senators (*pregadi*) and the ducal councillors, now increased to six, continued to act as before. The Doge and the *Consiglieri Ducali* together formed the *Consiglio Minore*. Later, in 1179, the Council of Forty (*Quaranta*) was created and eventually became one of the most powerful branches of the administration. The right of judgment on appeal in cases civil and criminal was taken from the Doge and vested in the Council of Forty. The Doge was called upon to swear the *Promissione Ducale*, or coronation oath, by which he was constitutionally bound.

On the other hand, to curb the people who hitherto had elected the Doge in tumultuary popular assembly, the *Maggior Consiglio* appointed eleven electors<sup>1</sup> who, in the basilica of San Marco, chose the chief magistrate, who was then submitted to the approval of the people. Thus the popular right of election, — which no State should ever abolish, but which the Venetian constitution recognised in a very limited form, — was gradually

<sup>1</sup> The electors, who were chosen by a long and tedious process, were increased to forty and then to forty-one.



restricted. At the election of Sebastiano Ziani (1172), when the people, seeing themselves robbed of their rights, raised an outcry, the leading citizens pointed out that the reform had no other object than to secure a more orderly selection of the Doge, and succeeded in persuading the populace to be satisfied with the mere right of confirmation, while the newly elected Doge strengthened this line of argument by scattering coin among the crowd. It was then resolved that the new Doge should always be presented to the populace with the formula, "This is your Doge, if so it please you." It would seem, however, that the people did make an effort to seize again the power that was slipping from their hands and attempted to hold an assembly at the election of Enrico Dandolo, which was attended by all the lagoon inhabitants from Grado to Capo d'Argine.

The government, though it still retained the semblance of democratic forms, was gradually concentrated in the hands of one class, whose views were enlightened, whose constitution was regulated by wise provisions, and whose representative was the Doge. The changes which from time to time were made in the method of electing the Doge and in the constitution of the Great Council, by fixing the age of eligibility and by introducing other modifications and further privileges, show that their object was to favour the aspirations of those families which by trade had come to the front in riches and in political ambition.

By adhering to the primitive form of nomination to the Great Council, it might happen that in any given year the council might find itself composed of outsiders (*novi homines*)—a result which suited neither the interests of the State nor the aims of the great families. To meet this danger, in 1286 a law was proposed, but

rejected, by which, with a view to excluding the “new men,” it was provided that only those should be eligible to the *Maggior Consiglio* whose father or paternal grandfather had already sat in the Great Council.

Meantime provisions were made to secure the proper movement of commerce, the safety of the city, and the creation of such magistracies as are necessary in a well-ordered State. Everyone was bound, within the limits of his condition and his ability, to lend service to the State; if anyone refused office to which he had been called, he lost his civil rights. For example, in 1189 the Doge Orio Mastropiero and his six councillors decreed that *Jacopus Julianus de confinio Santi Juliani*, who had refused an office conferred on him by election, *nullum honorem, nullum officium de nostra curia habere debeat quod per electores fiat et insuper nulla ei ratio debeat in curia nostra teneri*.<sup>1</sup> Every citizen was inspired by such a lofty sentiment of duty as to feel remorse if he had ever failed to serve his country on every occasion and to the best of his ability. The will of Giovanni Contarini, dated March 12, 1358, offers us a curious and noble example of expiation in the terms of the following legacy: “Lasso al comun de Venezia per falli da Officii o de Consei, ch’ io non fossi andato, che fossi tegnudo, lire L.”<sup>2</sup>

The period that closes with the end of the thirteenth century was both the happiest and most glorious in the whole history of the Republic, although it is true that it was marred by internal feuds between the more powerful families, such as the Dandolo and the Tiepolo, whose quarrels divided the people for some years into two

<sup>1</sup> Archivio di Stato, *Ducali ed Atti Diplomatici*, B<sup>a</sup>. VI.

<sup>2</sup> *Antichi Testamenti tratti dall’ Archivio della Congr. di Carità di Venezia*, Ser. VII, p. 25. Venezia, 1888.

hostile factions. At one moment also it would seem that the populace became impatient of their superiors, and, reviving their ancient rights, acclaimed as Doge Jacopo Tiepolo; but the nobles held the upper hand, and after putting down the tumult in the piazza, they proceeded to elect Piero Gradenigo, whose character gave assurance that he would keep the popular insolence sternly in check. A man of clear and sharp intelligence, full of common sense, with a spirit fortified in the arena of politics, Gradenigo, who placed his States above all other considerations, was firmly convinced that Venice would never be able to preserve and increase her prosperity unless even the most purely formal exercise of the unstable popular will was excluded from the government. He had before his eyes the example of other Italian cities where the excesses of the populace had ended in bringing the commune under a despot.

In February, 1297, Gradenigo reintroduced and carried the rejected law of 1286, which provided that only those who during the last four years had sat in the Great Council should be eligible for that council, without any further formality than twelve favourable votes in the *Quaranta*, and this eligibility was to be hereditary. There was a proviso that this law might be revised at the close of the year, but the aristocracy, whose mouthpiece Gradenigo was, handled the law for their own ends. This act of Gradenigo, which completely hampered all action by the "new men," the party that was always working for reforms, has been improperly styled "the closing of the Great Council"; but the Council was not absolutely closed, and for many years after fresh elections took place and the leading families were not rigidly excluded from the patriciate.



It is true that admission became ever more and more difficult, but it is a mistake to suppose that the Council was at one stroke closed up in immovable rigidity.

The great reform of Gradenigo, the true foundation of the hereditary aristocracy, gave rise to secret conspiracies which broke out into open revolt. But the Republic, aided by good fortune and rendered vigilant by suspicion, emerged triumphant. The conspiracy of Marin Bocconio, in 1300, was discovered and the ring-leader and his accomplices were hung. In 1310 many of the nobility, Quirini, Barozzi, Doro, Badoer, many clergy, and many of the people took part in the famous conspiracy of Bajamonte Tiepolo. Inasmuch as we are dealing chiefly with the private life of the Venetians, the old tradition, which still survives in the phrase *la vecchia del mortar*, offers a curious little touch. When Tiepolo, with a strong band of armed men, was just on the point of emerging on the piazza, an old woman dwelling in the Merceria came to the window and flung a mortar at the head of Tiepolo's standard-bearer.<sup>1</sup> The banner

<sup>1</sup> Cicogna (*Iscr. Ven.*, T. III, p. 30) says, "Some think, and I agree with them, that the woman who ran to the window at the noise in the street did not purposely fling the mortar, but accidentally pushed it over. Others, clearly in error, say that the mortar struck and slew Bajamonte himself. This woman, who some say was called Giustina Rossi, but who I find from a legal document was named Lucia, was sent for by the Doge Gradenigo, who wished to reward her. She would accept nothing but the privilege of hanging out of the famous window the standard of San Marco on Saint Vito's day and on other solemn occasions, and a promise that the procurators of San Marco should never be allowed to raise the rent either for her or her descendants. All her requests were granted (Tentori, Vol. V, p. 223, and Burchellati, *Comm. Hist. Tarvis.*, p. 601). Curiosity led me to follow up the history of this house and of its rent, that was never to be raised. Giustina or Lucia, whichever it be, paid in 1310 to the procurators, its owners, fifteen Venetian ducats a year." Cecchetti (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XXV, p. 144) published a document from which we learn that the lady of the mortar was called Maria de Oltise.



fell to the ground and the rebels lost heart, while the Doge and his men charged and routed Tiepolo.

The Republic punished the rebels with death or exile<sup>1</sup>; and with a view to probing and meeting *omnia ista negotia istarum novitatum*, it instituted the Council of Ten. That same year, 1310, the new magistracy appointed two of its members *Inquisitori dei Dieci*; these two were increased to three in 1539 and were then styled *Inquisitori alla conservazione dei segreti di Stato*.<sup>2</sup>

All through the fourteenth century Venice was torn by conspiracies. Among the most famous was that of the Doge Marino Falier, who was decapitated on the staircase of the Palazzo Ducale and buried without honours in the family tomb at SS. Giovanni e Paolo.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di. Stato, M. C., *Presbiter*, June 17, 1310, p. 20 V°. Among other resolutions it was determined to raze to the ground Tiepolo's house at Sant' Agostino, at the place now called the Campiello del Remer. A column *d'infamia* was erected to mark the spot. It bore this inscription:

Di Bajamonte fo questo tereno,  
E mo per lo so iniquo tradimento  
Se posto in Chomun per Altrui spavento  
E per mostrar a tutti sempre seno.

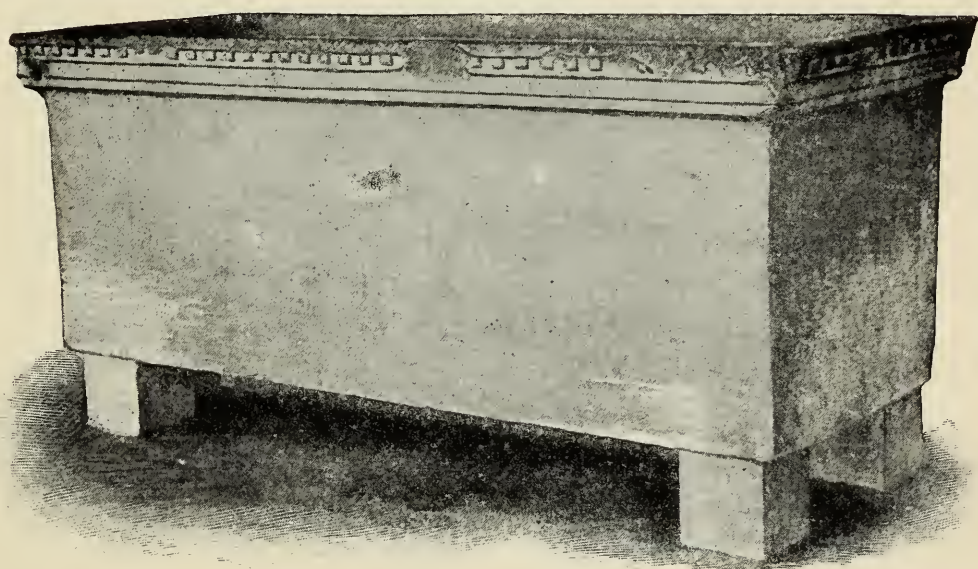
The column was removed from the Campiello del Remer and placed at the angle of the church of Sant' Agostino. In 1785 it was taken to the Villa Quirini at Altichiero near Padua, and in 1829 it was sold to an antiquity dealer, who resold it to the Duca Melzi, who placed it in the garden of his villa on Como. Not long ago the heirs of Melzi restored it to the commune of Venice, and it is now in the Museo Civico.

<sup>2</sup> Fulin, *Gl'Inquisitori dei Dieci* (Arch. Veneto, T. I, p. 22).

<sup>3</sup> The tomb of Marino Falier served for long as a water tank for the hospital dispensary. It is now in the outer loggia of the Museo Civico. It has lost all traces of inscription or coat of arms. The portrait of the traitorous Doge, which was placed in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, was effaced by order of the Ten. Here is the decree: "1366 (Cons. X). Die XVI mensis decembris. Capta. Quod figura ser Marini Faletro posita in Sala nova Maioris Consilii amoveatur in totum et remaneat locus vacuus in colore azuro, et in campo scribantur litere albe, *Hic fuit locus Ser Marini Faletro decapitati pro crimine prodicionis, dimitendo arma suam.*" Lorenzi, *Mon. per servir alla st. del Palazo Duc.*, p. 38. Venezia, 1886.



( A )



( B )

A — Lion on the door of the Campanile of S. Apollinare. B — Sarcophagus of the Falier family, in which was laid the body of the Doge Marino Faliero. (Museo Civico)





In the tragic drama of this conspiracy the popular voice has always assigned a large place to the Doge's wife, Aluica or Lodovica, daughter of Nicolò Gradenigo. In fact the common opinion is that the conspiracy was due to an insult to the Doge's honour, which he thought that the governing nobility failed to avenge as he desired. Marin Sanudo relates that at a ball in the palace one of the Dogaressa's maids of honour was insulted by Michele Steno, who was ordered out of the hall by the Doge. In revenge for this Steno left on the ducal throne a paper with these words: *Marin Falier doxe, da la bela moier, altri la galde e lui la mantien*. Steno was flogged with a fox-tail — a mark of ignominy — and condemned, moreover, to a month's imprisonment and a fine of one hundred lire. "The Doge," says Sanudo, "took great offence thereat and began to conspire against the State of Venice."<sup>1</sup> The older chronicles of the middle of the trecento, such as Lorenzo de' Monacis and Antonio Morosini, say that certain young bloods insulted the Doge and on their receiving merely nominal punishment Falier was swept away by his indignation and embarked on his conspiracy against the Republic. Historical criticism must hold these tales as pure inventions. As a matter of fact the documents of the Council of Forty (*Quarantia*) give the lie to much of the popular legend, and Sanudo, who while still a young man had very likely based his account on the current gossip, added later on in the margin of his book, if not corrections at least queries, after he became better informed about the facts of the case. It was the Doge's ambition to make himself Signore of Venice, and not the wrath of an injured husband that was the real motive of the

<sup>1</sup> Sanudo, *Vile dei Dogi*, cit., pp. 626 et seq.



conspiracy. The Dogaressa, after the condemnation of her husband, closed her days in suffering that upset her reason.<sup>1</sup>

The sombre shadow of popular rebellion lurking in the city, the wrath and jealousy aroused abroad by the triumphant progress of the Republic, found expression in terms of rage and bitterness in the rude verses of the day. An anonymous Genoese celebrates the victory of his State over the Venetians, *orgioxi, tignosi, porci, levrosi*, in the battle of Laiazzo in 1294, and in the capture of Curzola in 1298.<sup>2</sup> Nicolò Quirini, one of the conspirators in the rising of Bajamonte Tiepolo, in a sonnet accuses his compatriots of infamous crimes<sup>3</sup>; and Francesco Vannozzo, in 1397, at the court of the Carraresi, those implacable enemies of the Republic, endeavours to ingratiate himself with his masters by turning to ridicule those *hoche del mare*, those *superbi cani*, those *asenacci da basta* the Venetians, and heaps these vulgar insults on the city of the lagoons:

da valle  
senti e da cannuzza  
sì che tuo puzza  
soffrir non posso.

. . . . .  
Madre de 'nganni  
e de danni  
infiniti  
piena de sodomiti.<sup>4</sup>

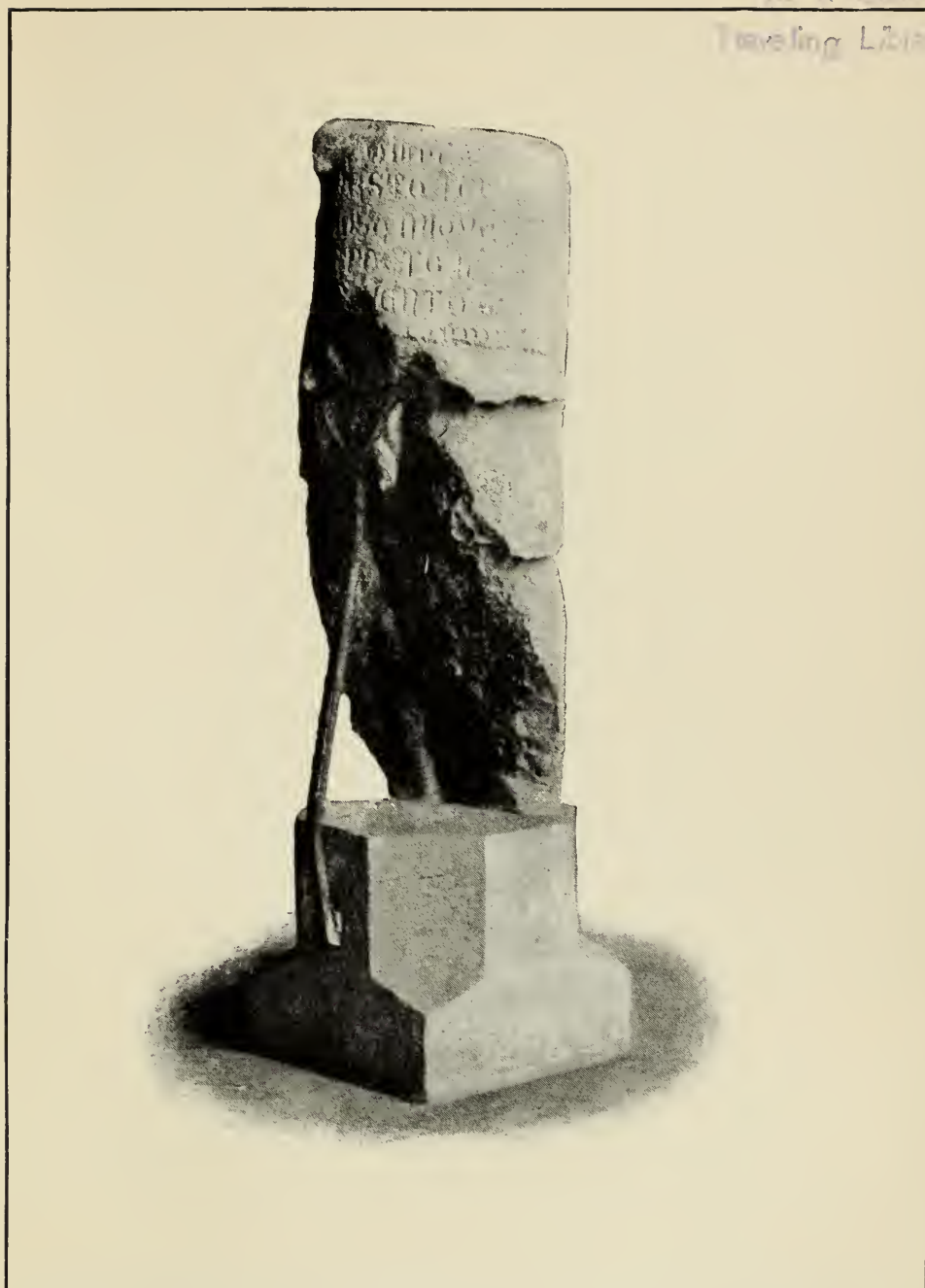
So too Giovanni Villani, speaking of the peace with Mastino della Scala, concluded against the will of

<sup>1</sup> Molmenti, *La Dogaressa di Venezia*, Cap. VI. Torino, 1884. Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero*. Venezia, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Monaci, *Crest. it. dei primi secoli*, fasc. II, p. 438. Città di Castello, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Lazzarini, *Rimatori Veneziani del secolo XIV*, p. 98. Padova, 1887.

<sup>4</sup> Grion, *Trattato di A. da Tempo*, p. 298. Bologna, 1869.



COLUMN marking the house of Baiamonte Tiepolo. (Museo Civico)



Florence by its allies the Venetians, inveighs against Venice, which seemed to the Florentines to have proved a faithless ally. He calls the Venetians “perfidi, estratti del sangue d’Antenore, traditore della sua patria di Troja.”<sup>1</sup> An anonymous Florentine launches fierce sarcasms against “faithless Venice” in these terms :

Viva il Pugliese e ’l Córso e ’l Romagnolo  
 Caino e Giuda, e Antinôro e Gano . . .  
 Giugurta e Cassio e Bruto a mano a mano,  
 E gli altri re che regnan sotto al polo . . .

Poi che Vinegia, donna di leanza,  
 partì per sè e pose in su la fetta  
 la particella a chi fiorì sua danza.

Giustizia, se non muovi a far vendetta  
 di tal nequizia e laida fallanza,  
 cosa non s’atterrà che s’imprometta.<sup>2</sup>

Boccaccio, who in the Decameron does not spare his own Florentines nor his dear Certaldesi, calls Venice *d’ogni bruttura ricevitrice*,<sup>3</sup> and applies the epithet of *bergoli*,<sup>4</sup> fickle, to the citizens of the best governed State in Europe. He goes on to say, in the *Commento a Dante*, that the island of Crete is *tirannescamente tenuta* by the Republic, and in his work *De montibus, silvis*,

<sup>1</sup> Villani, *Cron.*, Lib. XI, Cap. 90. In the early sixteenth century a Venetian made a note to the passage in Chapter III of Book V, where Villani records how the Emperor Frederic II was reconciled to the church, “Andò al passaggio d’ altro mare e là morio.” The Venetian commentator, alluding to the privileges granted by Pope Alexander III to the Republic, says, “See how this writer will not admit that the Signoria of Venice did much for the Pope. They were granted the Jubilee of the Karità, which endures to this day, 1512, in which I, Sabastian of Venice, constable, read this book, which belonged to Misser Jacometo da Novelo, constable” (Bibl. Marciana, Cod. Ital., Zanetta 34, C. 47 tergo).

<sup>2</sup> *Dieci sonetti storici fiorentini*. Firenze, 1893.

<sup>3</sup> *Decamerone*, Giorn. IV, Nov. II.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Giorn. VI, Nov. IV.



*fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus*, etc., speaking of the Venetians, he affirms that they have the audacity *et maris imperium occupare, si possint, et novo nomine vetus delere conantur, a se venetum appellant, quod per longa retro secula a Tuscis Adriaticum dictum*. In the first part of this unmerited criticism we catch an echo of the jealousy which inspired French and Neapolitans alike, both of whom had dominions in the Morea and in the islands of the archipelago. Boccaccio, at the court of Naples, probably heard Venetian rule in Crete<sup>1</sup> painted in gloomy colours by French and Neapolitan lords. The Genoese Andalò di Negro, master and friend of Boccaccio, may also have influenced the poet; he had travelled much and in speaking of his journeys he probably did not spare the rival of his own country. As regards the charge of having usurped the dominion of the Adriatic, the source of this is to be found in the rivalry between Venice and Naples over the dominion and the freedom of that sea.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand we have the enthusiastic admiration of poets and panegyrists bestowed on Venice, not only for her natural and artistic beauty and the magnificence of her shows, but also for the justice of her laws, the wisdom of her constitution, the might of her arms. Petrarch writes to Stefano Colonna: *ne ibid quidem invenies* (that is, in northern Italy) *ubi virtutis amicus atque otii conquiescat, praeter nobilissimam illam Venetorum urbem*. A Tuscan poet who flourished in the second half of the fourteenth century, Simone di ser Dino da Siena, praises to the skies the Republic which is governed

<sup>1</sup> On Venetian rule in Crete, see Thomas, *Commission des doges Andreas Dandolo für die Insel Crete vom Jahre 1350*. Munich, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Hortis, *Accenni alle scienze naturali nelle opere di G. Boccacci*. Trieste, 1877.

Non con tirannie ma con ragione,

and declares that as far as liberty is concerned

Questa solo nel mondo oggi sublima.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the many political questions which, during the trecento, divided Florence and Venice during the struggles with the della Scala and the Visconti, a Florentine who fully represents the spirit of his fellow-citizens, Franco Sacchetti, in a long poetical review of the terrible political situation in Italy, makes an exception in favour of Venice alone. After drawing a picture of the political misfortunes of Genoa, the Florentine novelist, an ardent admirer of the government of Venice, so different from his own, goes on to say :

Sta con le giuste sorte ;  
Con virtù scorte,  
In acqua, senza mura :  
Città con dirittura, in stato fermo  
E non infermo :  
Novecent' anni senza mutar schermo,  
Esser felice ;  
Sicchè si dice :  
Fra l'altre meglio regna  
E degna vive.<sup>2</sup>

An anonymous poet of the quattrocento holds that no city, be it ancient or modern, can compare with Venice :

Sopra ogni altra tu se imperatrice  
Nesuna de queste mai anticamente  
Non forono za mai cotanto potente.<sup>3</sup>

In a poem entitled *Primo trionfo della glorioxa città di Venesia*, written before 1413, a certain Gechin or

<sup>1</sup> Bini, *Rime e prose del buon secolo della lingua*, p. 94. Lucca, 1852.

<sup>2</sup> *Canzoniere di F. Sacchetti*, p. 68a (Bibl. Laurenziana, Cod. Ashburnham, 574).

<sup>3</sup> *Laude di Venezia di un Anonimo del 400* (Miscell. Marciana, 2441).

Zechin, a noble of Venice, fired by patriotic enthusiasm, compares the condition of Venice with that of other Italian cities, and exclaims :

Avventurata patria fra le oscure  
italiche città senza quiete ;  
che oggi senza te piangon sue sventure.

Nicolò Cieco d'Arezzo, a poetaster by profession, writing in 1425, invites all "poetic souls" to sing the praises of "tanta donna," as he calls Venice in triplets composed in honour of the league between Florence and Venice<sup>1</sup>; and finally, Jacopo d'Albizzotto Guidi sums up his enthusiasm in these words :

Di tutta Italia, Lombardia e Toscana,  
sicondo che si vede per effetto  
Vinegia è la più nobile e sovrana.

But Venice, paying little heed to praise or blame, calmly and surely proceeded to follow out her destiny.

<sup>1</sup> Moschetti, *Due Cron. Ven.*, p. 93. Flamini, *La lirica toscana del Rinascimento*, p. 179. Pisa, 1891 (*Ternario a laude dell' illus. Signoria di Venezia*). Morpurgo in *Riv. crit.*, VII, col. 70.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAWS

WRITERS on Venetian history lament the absence of any written law before the twelfth century, or at least that such laws have not come down to us. It is even uncertain whether at that date we really have the earliest civil code in the *Capitolare* of the *Magistrato del Proprio*.<sup>1</sup> The *Promissione* of the Doge Orio Mastropiero, dated 1181, is, in title, contents, and subject-matter, concerned with criminal law. It is certain, however, that a more ample penal and civil code was compiled under the dogeship of Enrico Dandolo (1195), though unfortunately not preserved to us.<sup>2</sup>

At the opening of the thirteenth century the work of legislation becomes fuller and richer. The Vice Doge, Rinieri Dandolo, in the absence of his father, published, in September, 1204, a new series of civil laws and created the office of *Giudice dell' Esaminador*. Pietro Ziani added others, notably in February, 1214, and in June, 1223. His work was continued by Jacopo Tiepolo, who published important reforms of the civil code in July, 1229, in November, 1231, and in May, 1233.<sup>3</sup> This brings us to 1242, when the Doge Jacopo

<sup>1</sup> Foscari, *Letteratura Veneziana*, Lib. I.

<sup>2</sup> Pertile, *St. del Diritto It.*, p. 153, Vol. II, Part II. Torino, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> We gather this from the edition of the most ancient civil statutes recently published by Riccardo Predelli and Enrico Besta (*Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, nuova serie, T. I, pp. 1 and 42). Besta, in the Preface, throws light on this vast legislative activity.



Tiepolo collected, arranged, amplified in part and in part modified, that series of civil laws which bears the name of the *Statuto Veneto* and forms the starting-point of organised legislation. In 1232 Tiepolo reformed the penal code as well.

It cannot, however, be denied that even earlier than the *Statuto* there must have existed special written laws. Tradition, unsupported by documentary evidence, says that Marcello, second of the three earliest Doges, promulgated sound and explicit laws.<sup>1</sup> But this tradition does not prove their existence, which cannot, as some would wish, be confirmed even by the privilege conceded in 1094 to the people of Loreo that their causes should be tried by Venetian *lex*,<sup>2</sup> nor yet by the fact, also resting on documentary evidence, that a certain Buono Orio, *gastaldo* of Torcello, heard a suit which arose in 1096 between the abbot and convent of Ammiana and a parish priest of that island *per legge e per sua sentenza*.<sup>3</sup> For as far as the privilege to the people of Loreo goes, it is not certain if the word *lex*, as distinguished from written law, referred to unwritten law, or even simply meant the practice of the courts<sup>4</sup>; and as for the phrase *per legem et sententiam judicare*, it has been justly observed<sup>5</sup> that in the middle ages the word *lex* was frequently used in a general sense to indicate law and justice in the abstract, and might be synonymous with *sententia* or even with *curia*. All the same there are not wanting documents to prove

<sup>1</sup> Sandi, *Principi*, etc., cit., Lib. I, Cap. VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Foscari, Lib. I.

<sup>3</sup> Cecchetti, *La Vita dei Veneziani fino al 1200*. Venezia, 1870.

<sup>4</sup> Schupfer, *Manuale di St. del Diritto It.*, p. 366. Città di Castello, 1895. Besta, Enrico, *Il diritto e le leggi civili di Venezia fino al Dogado di Enrico Dandolo*, pp. 29 and 30. Venezia, 1900.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

the existence of written law as early as the tenth century. For example we find that in June, 960, the Doge Pietro Candiano IV, when introducing legislation against traffic in slaves, makes reference to an earlier law of the Doge Orso I. Of the same date we have laws forbidding the transmission of letters from Germany to Constantinople, and prohibiting the export of arms or wood for shipbuilding to lands owned by the Saracens.<sup>1</sup>

It is of importance to note that the Cronaca Altinate also gives us some positive information about the state of the law in the earlier period. There we find it recorded that the Venetians drew their own peculiar laws partly from Roman and partly from Salic law, and that suits were decided either by custom (*consuetudine*) or upon documentary evidence, whether holographic (*chirografo*) or notarial (*memoriali*). No one could be tried for theft except upon denunciation by two credible witnesses. If found guilty he lost an eye or a hand; if convicted a second time he lost the other eye or hand. Such sentences seem to reveal the influence of Lombard or Frankish criminal procedure. Custom as a source of law always preserved great weight in Venice, more there, perhaps, than in any other State, and the *Statuto* itself recognised the right of custom to override the written law (*desuetudine*).<sup>2</sup> We therefore find a number of works dealing with Venetian custom, of which the most remarkable is the *Splendor Venetorum civilis consuetudinum*, written by Jacopo Bertaldo, ducal chancellor in 1298 and bishop of Veglia in 1314.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gfrörer, XXIII and XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Pertile, op. cit., Vol. II, Part II, p. 60. Schupfer, op. cit., p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> Bertaldo's *Splendor* was published for the first time by Schupfer in 1895 in the *Biblioteca juridica medii ævi*, whose editor is Prof. A. Gaudenzi. Cfr. Besta, Enrico, *Jacopo Bertaldo* (*Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, T. XIII, p. 109). As a precious monument of ancient Venetian law, the glosses briefly

Sandi, when rehearsing a long and varied series of laws which were in force in early times in Italy, is at pains to prove that written law existed in the earliest centuries.<sup>1</sup> We may accept his contention if for no other reason save the fact that the islands were beyond doubt in touch with the Eastern Empire. There does not exist, nor has there ever existed, an organised assemblage of human beings without laws, and therefore it is impossible to believe that the law was not embodied in public acts, even in the primitive constitution of Venice. We have seen the condition of the early refugees who settled in the lagoon islands. The inhabitants of the ruined Roman colonies must have brought with them not only Roman civilisation, but Roman law and the intimate knowledge of Roman institutions. Neither the jealousies, discords, nor internal feuds which followed avail to demonstrate either a state of anarchy or even the absence of law, for similar episodes are common to the history of every race. It appears then that we are justified in concluding that the task of reorganising civil jurisdiction can have been neither long nor arduous, and that the written law of Venice must have been of ancient date, based in part on Roman or Byzantine laws, and, as regards the criminal side, on the Lombard and Frankish codes. As far as Roman law is concerned, there are two questions which we must keep carefully apart: did Roman law enter as the creative element in Venetian jurisprudence, or had Roman law *qua* Roman law a direct authority as common law—that is to say, as the law to which recourse was had when the law of the country was silent? Taking

noticed by Besta in the *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto*, Ser. VII, Vol. VIII, deserve attention.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. I, Cap. VIII; Lib. II, Cap. IX.



the latter point first, it is certain that Roman law had not that position in Venice, where at the most it enjoyed a theoretical authority—that is to say, that Venetian judges would doubtless take into highest consideration the principles laid down by Roman jurists whenever they were called upon to fill gaps in the code or in the custom by the light of their own intelligence.<sup>1</sup> As regards the other point, beyond all doubt the basis of Venetian law was to a large extent Roman law. Bertaldo (p. 32) declares that in Venice *jura communia et leges a latinis consuetudinibus derivata*. But there are other elements to take into account, elements from which that second great fountain of Venetian law—custom—drew its nutriment. There is the Byzantine source, which led Bertaldo to say *omnes consuetudines venetæ . . . a grecorum fontibus derivatæ* (p. 52); there are the sources, Lombard, Frankish, barbarian in short, which left their trace on the penal legislation<sup>2</sup>—and more especially on many branches of private jurisprudence, and which stand out in the titles of certain officers, such as the *gastaldi* and the *buoni uomini*, who were assessors to the judges<sup>3</sup>; lastly there was the canonical source, introduced mainly by the action of the bishops and prelates, who took a share in the political and legislative life of the State.<sup>4</sup> From all this we may naturally conclude that a special jurisprudence existed and flourished, and this we find in various passages called Venetian law.

<sup>1</sup> Pertile, op. cit., Vol. II, Part II, § 63, p. 57, and § 68, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Appunti per la st. del dir. pen. nel dogado ven. innanzi al 1232* (in *Filangeri* del maggio 1899, n. 5, passim). The words of the *Cronaca Altinate*, — *de romana autem sive de salica (franca) traxerunt legem*, — leave no doubt on the point.

<sup>3</sup> Pertile, op. cit., Vol. II, Part I, § 53, p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il diritto e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 20.



The absence of written law is hardly more deplorable than the absence of all documentary evidence as to the several branches of the law prior to the tenth century. Profound darkness reigns over the early years. But if, with the help of documents of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we can reconstruct an organised system of law, it is clear that an agglomeration of people in a growing and progressive community could not have held together during the preceding centuries—in which we find them making foreign treaties and sending out fleets even as far back as the eighth century—unless they had had to guide them a code that was both fixed and written.

Let us now take a few facts which will enable us to form a judgment as to the nature of these laws and of their practical application in the civil and criminal jurisprudence of Venice.<sup>1</sup> The relations between the government and the governed were from the very first both frequent and intimate. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries we have notices which prove that justice was administered in public, in the midst of the people, over whom the great ones (*maggioirenti*) presided, it is true, but from among whom they called up to the bench one or more simple freemen to sit along with the judges. If that were so in the eleventh and twelfth centuries we have every reason to believe that a like procedure

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that all ancient deeds, even private ones, are drawn up by notaries, almost as though the authority of the law was recognised as superior to the authority of the prince. The *Promissione al Maleficio* exists in the notarial acts of Paterniano da Pozzo (March, 1181, ind. XV, Rialto). In the Royal Notarial Archives, among many forms of notarial acts, we have found a singular one. On April 14, 1239, a woman is excommunicated for not having maintained the vow of chastity which she voluntarily took. The notarial act is drawn up *in barca episcopi juxta ripam de ca' Barbani* at Castello.

obtained in the earlier centuries, and possibly with even wider authority for the people. The primitive procedure for the administration of justice was therefore very simple. Under the open sky, or at least in a place open to all comers, public affairs were handled, the judges having as witnesses of their acts the free air of heaven and the clamouring presence of the populace. Such we believe was the method of procedure down to the time when the first documents begin to throw a ray of light upon events, and enable us to make an induction as to earlier procedure from the facts of later procedure. After the year 1000 the Doge and his councillors administered justice, sometimes in the courtyard of the palace (*curtis palatii*), which was the usual meeting-place of popular assemblies, sometimes on the site of the property in dispute, sometimes in a church. The sworn evidence of parties was admitted in the absence of oral or documentary evidence.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, in 1100 the Doge Vitale Michiel, at the instance of a certain Stefania, widow of a Lupareni and married to a Bembo, calls on her to bring evidence of her credit for her dower against the heirs of her first husband. Stefania appeared in court with her sureties and unimpeachable witnesses, proved her claim, and the Doge himself, with his judges as assessors, pronounced sentence, placing her in possession of lands and houses the property of her late husband. But the heirs of Bembo refusing to surrender this real estate, perhaps on the plea that it was merely subject to a lien, and Stefania having received no compensation of any kind, a fresh

<sup>1</sup> About 950 the tithe tax was introduced. Some years later certain citizens were called upon to pay this tax; they swore they had paid it and were released. This proves that an oath was accepted as full proof. Gfrörer, XXVII.

suit arose which was settled by the adjudication to Stefania of a fixed sum in cash, after a careful estimate had been made of the whole value of the property in dispute. Here the procedure, though not quite clear from the documents, sufficiently proves that the proceedings were regular and judicial in form. The widow Lupareni appears in court, offers proof in support of her plea, and judgment follows the law. Why the losing side did not submit to the first sentence and surrender the real estate we cannot say, unless it be, as we have already conjectured, that the question was rather one of a lien on the property than of the property itself, and that the defendants sought to discharge the lien by a cash payment.<sup>1</sup>

Another Doge, Domenico Michiel (1123), went to the Campo San Zaccaria and there, in the presence of the parties and assisted by a judge and some *probi viri*, established the terms of an accord between a certain Bonaldi and the abbess of San Zaccaria, who had been sued for the occupation of a tract of land in the very campo where the court was sitting. But some years later, either because the abbess had failed to fulfil the terms of the accord, or for some other reason, Bonaldi again sued her. The court again met in the campo, and the judge called on the abbess to produce her titles to the land. She said she could not, as they were burned. Bonaldi was then called on to produce his titles and put in a will of one of his ancestors. After reading and examining this document, the judge declared Bonaldi the owner in fee simple of the land,<sup>2</sup> a judgment summary but just, as it was based on the legal proof of an unimpeachable document.

<sup>1</sup> Cecchetti, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*



We must notice two documents of legal attestation and of testimony; one dated 1072, in which Domenico Rosso declares himself to have been the witness of the consignment of a certain quantity of alum to Domenico Serzi, who, it seems, denied the receipt when sued by another Rosso.<sup>1</sup> The second document is dated 1098; in it Martino Vetulo, priest of San Procolo, declares himself a witness in a suit about a hedge which was encroaching on another's property.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to a sentence of the Doge Pietro Polani, dated 1140, in favour of a widow Gradenigo of Santi Apostoli, for restitution of her dower,<sup>3</sup> our attention is specially called to a document of April, 1086,<sup>4</sup> whereby a certain Paolo Salamon of Rialto gives to a certain Domenico Pantaleo, also of Rialto, a receipt for a number of documents relating to title in a certain property. The vendor, not the purchaser, in case of subsequent dispute of title, was called on to establish his title; this title was subsequently disputed and the vendor, not the purchaser, was called on to make it good. The vendor at the act of sale consigned to the purchaser the proofs of title, but he had the right to receive them back, if he required them, within a fixed date, after which attack on title was prescribed.

We must also record a renunciation of rights over real estate made in September, 1061, by a priest, the vicar of San Zuliano,<sup>5</sup> and a mortgage effected in 1176, a perfectly clear and explicit document, by which Carlotta di San Zulian receives in loan from Giovanni the dyer

<sup>1</sup> See, in Appendix, Documents D, *Atti Giuridici* (n. I).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (n. III).

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Ducali ed Atti dipl.*, B<sup>a</sup> 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Documents D (n. II).

<sup>5</sup> Arch. di Stato, Arch. di San Zaccaria.



twenty *soldi Veneti* for six months; for this she is to pay four *soldi*, and she gives as security the wooden house in which she dwells.<sup>1</sup> Remarkable too is a deed of sale of land made by Felice Moro, parish priest of San Salvatore, a century earlier, that is, in July of 1078, which deserves attention for its legal form and for various contingencies which it foresees and provides for<sup>2</sup>; also a discharge for legacies devised by a certain Giovanni Ferrario in favour of the priest Fiorenzo Bragadin in May, 1056,<sup>3</sup> noteworthy on account of its early date and for the regularity of its wording.

We might cite many other cases to prove the existence of deeds of succession to, of surrender, or sale of property, of rights in the soil and liens over it, of leases, investitures, mortgages, burdens; a whole armoury of documents, in short, referring to a jurisprudence which, considering its date, was clearly well organised. Justice was administered by judges, councillors, tribunes, *gastaldi*, delegates, *ripari*, constables, juries, and notaries,<sup>4</sup> and showed quite clearly how deep its roots had struck. We are, therefore, authorised to affirm that down to the time when Venice became a free and independent State, civil law was sufficiently well developed in its four great branches, — rights of individuals and families, rights of property, rights of contract, and rights of succession.

As to the rights of persons in the eye of the law, our notices are very scanty previous to 1200. The idea of association, of a corporate life, was more fully developed

<sup>1</sup> See Documents E, *Forme di documenti* (n. III).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (n. II).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (n. I).

<sup>4</sup> The *Statuto annonario* of the Doge Sebastian Ziani (1173) shows us laws, magistrates, judges, procurators fiscal, treasury officers, all flourishing in the twelfth century.

in the religious than in the civil world; and as often happens, ecclesiastical institutions gave to the laity the type for the constitution of their corporate life.<sup>1</sup> Nor can we be surprised that in Venice, as well as in other parts of Italy, the Roman concept pure and simple of a corporate body recognised by the law and quite distinct from its component members should have undergone notable modifications, due, possibly, to the influence of barbarian law, Lombard or Frank.

As regards the individual in his corporate aspect, if we begin with the lowest social grade we see that the condition of slaves was far from hard, and certainly was not to be compared to the condition of the *parici* in Cyprus, or the *serventerie* of Crete, of the men of the *masnada* or the *mansi*.<sup>2</sup> Although the slave in Venice certainly passed into the dominion of his purchaser, who looked on him as a chattel, *res sua propria*,<sup>3</sup> slaves retained a certain personality; they could approach the tribunals, they enjoyed the rights of family, and had the power to enter into contracts, to acquire, and to possess.<sup>4</sup> Manumission became more and more frequent, either on the death of the owner, who freed his

<sup>1</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Lazari, V., *Del traffico e delle condizioni degli schiavi in Venezia nei tempi di mezzo* (*Miscell. di Stor. It.*, Vol. I, p. 22. Torino, 1862). Cibrario, *Della schiavitù e del servaggio*, etc. Milano, 1868-69.

<sup>3</sup> In a list of effects (*chosse*) in the *Chomesseria di Missier Sebastian Badoer*, after mentioning bedsteads, hangings, sideboards, lamps, etc., three slaves are entered, *Marcella, Ester, Benvegnada, appressade ducati 180* (*Arch. Not.*, *Raccolta a parte*. Atti Andreolo Cristiano, 1390).

<sup>4</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 52. Slaves were not without protection from the law even for trifling injuries; we may cite a curious example: in May, 1372, a certain Antonio Avonal and Giacobello, a tanner, amused themselves by pricking with a long pin the slaves who passed by on their way to vespers at Saint Mark's. The first got three months and the second two in the prisons called the *Pozzi*. Cecchetti, *La donna nel medioevo a Venezia* (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XXXI, p. 49).

slaves in his will, or by simple forms such as *cartulae libertatis* or *paginae testamenti*. It is to be noted that in the later years the pre-Justinian formulas often survived in the *cartulae*, though void of meaning. For example, it would be stated that the slave “inter liberos vadat cum omnibus heredibus libere quocumque ei placuerit a modo in antea civesque efficiatur romanus ita quod nullus cum amplius audeat servitutis vinculo subjugare.”<sup>1</sup> The manumitted form a social class above the slaves but below the freemen.

Both the persons and the property of foreigners were adequately protected in Venice even if no special treaties on the subject existed between the Republic and foreign States, and often in spite of the absence of reciprocity, at least in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> For example, there is no trace of the right of aubaine. A Venetian who failed to satisfy the just claims of a *forinsecus* was *ipso facto* declared *addictus* to the stranger (*Promissione del Mastropiero*, § d), and foreigners were even allowed to acquire real property.<sup>3</sup> Venetian subjects abroad enjoyed the protection of the Republic. We have an example in a document dated Pisa, July 13, 1117, where we find the estimate of the property of a Gradenigo, who had died in Pisa, and the consignment of the effects to the Venetian envoy resident there.<sup>4</sup> In another document, of 1150, we find that a Ziani, delegate of the Doge at Constantinople, was appointed arbitrator to dissolve the partnership in a commercial concern between

<sup>1</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> The court for suits between Venetians and foreigners was the *Magistrato del Forestier*, of extremely ancient date. In 1244 the *Magistrato del Petizione* was created to deal with petitions presented by Venetians and foreigners alike.

<sup>3</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir.*, etc., pp. 66-70.

<sup>4</sup> Bibl. Marc., Cod. lat., Cl. XIV, n. LXXI.



Enrico Jubiano of Murano and Raimondino Donno of San Biagio.<sup>1</sup>

As regards family rights the State took into contemplation matrimony, but only in its legal aspect, leaving to the Church all disciplinary jurisdiction, as being within the ecclesiastical province. There was no community of goods between husband and wife, for Venice preserved more completely than elsewhere the Roman system of the dower. But in some cases, if the woman wished to enter into contract or to acquire rights, the husband's consent was necessary; *ipso viro meo consenciente*, so run certain deeds of gift.<sup>2</sup>

In Venice the doctrine of the *patria potestas* was less rigidly enforced than elsewhere, although it was not confined to the period of minority. Children who shared the family life of their father were considered almost as co-proprietors in the family belongings, and in cases of alienation of family property it was the rule to recite their names along with those of their parents.<sup>3</sup> Sons emerged from the *filialis subjectio* in virtue of a public deed; daughters *ipso jure* on marriage.<sup>4</sup> The question of tutelage was provided for by law.<sup>5</sup>

To pass now to the rights of property. Real property undoubtedly ranked above personalty in the eye of the law, provided that it lay within the confines of the State. The right of preference in favour of relations, partners, and neighbours in all cases affecting real property was undisputed. The theory of a *dominium eminens*, vested

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Ducali ed Atti dipl.*, B<sup>a</sup> 5.

<sup>2</sup> See the deed of gift executed by a Storlato in favour of the church of San Felice in Ammiana (Arch. di Stato, Arch. Not., Atti Rainaldo, priest, January, 1152).

<sup>3</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, pp. 91, 92.



in the Doge or the State, over all unoccupied lands, was accepted. The right to cultivate them required permission from the Doge, who in return for leave to occupy, and as a recognition of superiority, received as *honorancia* some small fine.

The person who reclaimed from the sea a tract of land became its legal owner. It is clear, therefore, that even in the tenth century the rights of property were well organised. During the same period we find deeds of sale and purchase, the juridical theory and formulas of which are allied to those of later times and are affiliated to the theory and formula of Roman law.

A deed of sale, dated 1031,<sup>1</sup> concluded between a certain Giovanni Venerio Bolli and Martino Bianco and Orsone Nadal, and affecting lands lying in the district of Chioggia, drawn up by Domenico, priest and notary, contains a clause by which the purchaser, in case of eviction, had a claim for improvements made in the subject. A clause which reveals a just appreciation of rights.

Another deed of purchase and sale, dated December, 1088,<sup>2</sup> concluded between a second Giovanni Venerio Bolli and certain co-proprietors of a tract of land at Chioggia, the vendors, and Domenico Gradenigo, the purchaser, records the boundaries and the burdens of the property, and stipulates for the payment of five pounds in gold in case of eviction. In 1039 we have a deed of legal donation,<sup>3</sup> granted by Maria Jubiani, with the consent of her husband, to Giovanni Stefano Jubiani, her relation, affecting a tract of family property in the island of Luprio, declaring that it is transferred

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Documents F, *Terreni venduti e ceduti* (n. I).

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, Arch. San Zaccaria, *Estere*, B<sup>a</sup> 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, *Stabili diversi in Venezia*, B<sup>a</sup> 7.

to the said Giovanni, *nulla penita cogente aut suadente vel vim inferente*, with full and free right of possession to the donee and his heirs, and containing description of boundaries and other particulars corresponding to a just and prudent appreciation of the law.

Leases of land, either on feu-duty or rent, were common; they were rarely perpetual, the usual term being twenty-nine years, a length of lease adopted in many other parts of Italy, and designed to avoid rights of prescription. For example, there exists a deed of January, 1098<sup>1</sup>; it is a lease on rent, granted for twenty-nine years by the Monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, by which it places Vitale di Pellestrina in possession of a tract of land at Pellestrina, on an annual rent of three Veronese *soldi* and a pair of fowls, to be paid each Martinmas. The land was improved and the rent raised to a third of its annual product or its equivalent in coin. Venetian documents of the eleventh and twelfth centuries record various burdens on land, such as the right of way, the right of landing, the right of drainage, etc.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting document of August, 1087,<sup>3</sup> drawn up by the notary Domenico, a clerk in Rialto, in virtue of which the partners in a wharf on the island of Luprio invite another of their partners, a Foscari, to take his share in the construction of a bank, shows us by the multiplicity of its reciprocal stipulations that even then, in order to avoid future divergences, mutual understandings were made into legally binding deeds.

For the rest, possession was well protected against molestation or violence, even if these were exercised

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Documents F (n. II).

<sup>2</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, Arch. di San Zaccaria, *Stabili diversi in Venezia*, B<sup>a</sup> 7.

by the proprietor himself, on the principle that no one may take the law into his own hands. The author of the assault was called upon to give surety that he would for the future abstain from all violence (*forcium*). Procedure in such cases was summary.<sup>1</sup>

Transfer of property was secured and published by the system known as *investitiones*.<sup>2</sup> In the law of contracts more than elsewhere, we find that the foundation of Venetian law is Roman law, modified by Byzantine law, from which undoubtedly came the large use of penalties established by the deed itself (*pene convenzionali*); even the Greek word *πρόστιμον* (*prostimum*) found its way into the lagoons.<sup>3</sup> Other forms of security were the pledge (*pegno*), surety (*fideiussione* or *plezaria*), which assumed the external appearance of the Lombard *vadia*, and in Venice even went by that name; in proof whereof a *breviarium testatum et roboratum* was erected in formulas that we gather from a deed of January, 1148.<sup>4</sup>

We may cite a deed of pledge which a certain Scaranto of Lesser Chioggia, acting as surety for a certain Stania, caused to be drawn up by the notary and subdeacon Tribuno.<sup>5</sup> This deed, which is dated October, 1081, sets forth that Stania bound himself to assign three salt-pans and two-thirds of a vineyard as security to Morari, a monk of San Giorgio, on the understanding that if Stania failed to fulfil his obligations the monastery should have the right to enter on the property as freeholders; on the other hand the

<sup>1</sup> Besta, Enrico, loc. cit., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ibid., pp. 124-126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ibid., p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Cit. dal Besta, ibid., p. 143, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Manimorte*, San Giorgio Maggiore.



monastery pledged itself to receive as a monk a son of Stania and to disburse his dower or entrance fee of one hundred *denari mancusi*.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that very early in the history of Venice business transactions regarding commerce, and especially maritime traffic, must have been well developed. Of this nature was the *foenus nauticum* (advance on bottomry), which may be compared with what the Venetians called a *contractus per finem*<sup>2</sup>; such, too, were the *colligantiae*, which especially referred to over-sea trade. These constituted the contracts known elsewhere as *contratti di commenda*, and in Venice were sometimes called *commendatio*. On this special subject the Venetian documents are earlier than any others in Western Europe, some even dating back beyond the year 1000.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore documents prove that the system of insurance was of very ancient date in Venice.

If we consider the steady progress of Venetian navigation it is clear that almost from the very birth of the Republic navigation laws must have existed. A customary nautical code, analogous to the Greek code, known as the false code of Rhodes, dating from the eighth century, whereby the parties interested in navigation endeavoured to guard themselves against the grave risks of sea traffic, fusing in a single person the owner and the captain, was certainly adopted at Venice. But very soon the development of trade called for more definite regulations, and hence we get the *compagnia de nave*, which included the owner of the ship and the

<sup>1</sup> A gold or silver coin in common use in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. Its value varied from time to time.

<sup>2</sup> Besta, Enrico, loc. cit., p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Sacerdoti, *Le colleganze nella pratica dell' affari e nella legislazione Veneta* (*Atti del R. Ist. Ven.*, 1899-1900, T. LIX, pp. 1 et seq.).



owner of the cargo, who joined in council with the navigating officer (*nocchiero*), the supercargo (*presbiter*), the stevedore (*penese*), and other ship's officers.<sup>1</sup> Thus there sprang up local nautical legislation, which would of itself prove that the Venetians did not accept the *Consolato del Mare*, even if such an assertion had not already been demonstrated on other grounds to be false. The Venetians, basing themselves on their own secular traditions, began to develop a nautical code of their own, and here again, as in every other department, we find them taking the lead among the States of Italy<sup>2</sup>; and in fact in the ancient treaties with the Prince of Antioch (1167) and with the King of Armenia (1201) we have record of nautical and mercantile legislation and of a maritime *jus Venetum*. In the *Promissione al Maleficio* (1181), which contains several clauses affecting nautical matters, distinct mention is made of an ancient local code of navigation laws; and in the *Capitolare Nautico* of the Doge Pietro Ziani (1227),<sup>3</sup> we find in compendium the regulations which in 1229 were developed in the fifty-two chapters of the *Statuti* of Jacopo Tiepolo, and in 1255, by the Doge Rinieri Zeno in his code, divided into one hundred and twenty-nine chapters entitled *Statuta et ordinamenta super navibus et aliis lignis*, rendered complete and binding by a decree of the Great Council in 1283.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sacerdoti and Predelli, *Gli Statuti Marittimi Veneziani fino al 1225*. (*Nuovo Arch. Ven.*, nuova serie, T. IV, pp. 113 et seq.)

<sup>2</sup> Sclopis, *St. della legisl. Ital.*, Vol. I, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Ordinamenta super saornatione, caricatione et stivatione navium* (March 12, 1227). *Capitulare Navium* in the *Liber Plegiorum* (cfr. Sacerdoti and Predelli, cit.).

<sup>4</sup> Tiepolo's *Statuto Nautico* was printed in 1477 as an appendix to the *Statuto Civile* in ancient Venetian dialect, printed by Filippo di Piero. It was republished in the editions of the Statutes dated 1492 and 1528. Zeno's code was less fortunate. It appeared in fragmentary form in the

This code is the oldest document dealing with the fundamental rules of maritime law and navigation; provision is made in regard to ballast, averages, crew, cargo, armament, victualling and finding of ships, ships' measurements, and so on. It is to be noted that at Venice, at least as early as the twelfth century, the *jus naufragii* was sternly repressed, first by Orio Mastropiero in 1196 and then by the criminal code of Tiepolo.

Let us turn now to examine the right of succession, a point of great importance, as the legislation on the subject reveals the influence of Byzantium. The legitimate line of succession passed first through descendants, then through ascendants, then through collaterals, finally through other relations by blood or by alliance, among whom were counted children separated from the family, and their descendants.<sup>1</sup> Women were placed in subordinate grade. Daughters, after receiving their dower, had no further claim on the paternal estate. Widows, however, shared with sons, and if they had brought with them a dower exceeding one hundred and twenty-five lire, they were by custom allowed, under the title of *grosina* or *pelliccia vidualis*, to exact an augmentation of their dower in proportion to the sum they had brought into the family. Great liberty in the devising

fifteenth century (for example in the *Capitolare della Corte dell' Esaminador*). But it was only after the lapse of five centuries that it was discovered in its integrity in a codex belonging to the Quirini family. It is now in the collection of the Quirini Stampalia foundation. This, however, is not the official text. That is to be found in the R. Archivio di Venezia and has now been published for the first time in the *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* by Sacerdoti and Predelli. In Zeno's code a wise forethought provides for all that may concern commerce and navigation, from the powers of *bajuli*, *duces*, *consules*, *rectores* to the *stazzatura*, the gauging of ships, the duties of the captain and of the crew, and regulations as to ballast, averages, prizes, and armament.

<sup>1</sup> Besta, Enrico, *Il dir. e le leggi civ.*, etc., pp. 94 et seq.

of his property was left to the testator, partly owing to the fact that Venetian law abandoned some of the characteristic axioms of Roman law, as for example that the will itself must constitute the heirs; partly because Venetian law did not adopt the limitation introduced by the Teutonic codes. On the other hand, Teutonic ideas account for the frequent appointment of testamentary executors or *commissari*. It was a common occurrence for the husband to make liberal provision for the wife, but usually on condition that she remained a widow. There was almost always a legacy to some church or congregation or pious institution. If the sons, as often happened, remained united after the decease of their father, that created the so-called *compagnia fraterna*.

Seeing how well organised the civil law was, we cannot believe that the government did not make wise provision for the punishment of crime. Such a mixed population as that of Venice called for a vigilant eye and a firm hand to prevent or to punish tumult, which might easily break out, and to guarantee the integrity of property and of persons.

In the *Promissione al Maleficio* of the Doge Orso Mastropiero (1181) we find a great similarity of punishments to those recorded in the *Cronaca Altinate* for an earlier period. The murderer was hung<sup>1</sup>; homicide, according as it was premeditated or insidious (*veleno*), met with different penalties. In the first case, the culprit shared the fate of the assassin and was hung, a certain sum was deducted from his property for the benefit of the heirs of his victim, and a further sum went to the government as a fine. If, on the other hand, death

<sup>1</sup> The *Cronaca* of Giovanni Diacono (p. 118) records that in 864 Doge Orso hanged the two assassins of the Bishop of Torcello, one on the banks of the Sile, the other near Torcello.



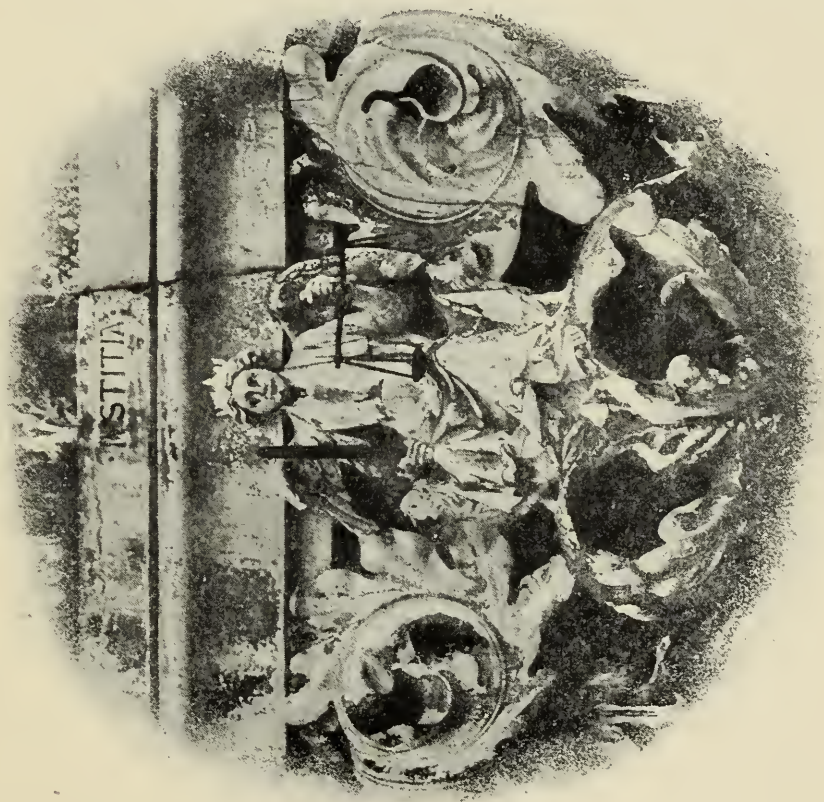
was caused by poison, the culprit was condemned either to the gallows or to the pyre; if the poisoning ended not in death but in loss of reason, three punishments were applicable, according to the gravity of the case, — the loss of one hand, the loss of both, or blinding by brazier. The point on which the *Promissione* of 1181 — the foundation of later and the continuance of earlier penal legislation — appears most severe is the crime of theft. The man who stole to the value of twenty *soldi* was branded and flogged. If found guilty a second time for the same amount, he lost his eyes. If a larger sum was in question, the culprit was hung. If a thief, caught *in flagrante*, defended himself with weapons or wounded any one in his flight, he was condemned to lose his eyes and his right hand. Any one found in another's house with evil intent was flogged and mutilated; a thief who used violence in another's house lost his eyes.

While Venetian penal legislation displays a great care for property, we find, on the other hand, that crimes of violence against the person were punished by a simple fine to the government and to the victim. This mildness towards crimes of personal violence proves that the early laws of Venice diverged widely from the Roman Code; but it also proves that the islanders, jealous of their hard-earned possessions, were determined to defend them against robbery by the severity of the penalties attaching to theft.

The Civil Code and the Criminal Law contained in the *Promissione al Maleficio*, promulgated by the Doge Tiepolo, remained in force, with various additions and modifications introduced in later years, until the fall of the Republic. Firmly based on its original conception of justice, Venice consecrated her past and committed



her fortunes to the future. With a sentiment of fair dealing so intimate and profound, these principles remained clear and sharply defined among rulers and ruled. They were no vain shows or symbols, those figures of justice, those portraits of the wisest law-givers of antiquity which the Republic placed among the saints in the mosaics of St. Mark's or carved on the capitals of the columns, on the façade, and on the angles of the Ducal Palace, to attest the fact and convey the warning that before the majesty of the law all other authority, however powerful, must make obeisance and submit.



(A)



(B) V. State

Engraving Library

A—Justice—from a capital of the Ducal Palace. B—The Judgment of Solomon—lower portico of the Ducal Palace



## CHAPTER V

### COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION

**A**BOUT the year 1000 John the Deacon tells us that Venice was far in advance of all the neighbouring provinces both in riches and in magnificence. Two centuries later Martino da Canal, when tracing the story of the city *plus belle et plus plaisante dou siecle, ploine de biauté et de tos biens*, adds that *les marchandies i corent par cele noble cite, com fait l'eive des fontaines*.<sup>1</sup> Venice owed this prosperity to commerce. The refugees of the lagoons sailed the rivers whose mouths they commanded, and from the very first they traded in articles of common food, such as salt and fish. They soon secured trading privileges from the conquerors of the neighbouring mainland, from the Greeks with whom they carried on a lively traffic, especially in Ravenna, and from the Lombards, whose king, Luitprand, concluded a treaty of commerce and alliance with the Doge Paoluccio Anafesto.<sup>2</sup>

In the first quarter of the eighth century the Venetians, after having lent their fleet to aid the Greeks against the Lombards, passed from the protection of the Greek empire to an alliance with Byzantium. They pushed forward into distant seas, and, by the middle of the eighth century, they had already reached Africa and

<sup>1</sup> *La Cronique des Veniciens de Maistre Martin da Canal*, § 11 (*Arch. Stor. Ital.*, Ser. I, T. VIII).

<sup>2</sup> Dandolo, *Cron.*, XXIV, 130.



the ports of the Levant. By their dexterity, sagacity, and activity they obtained concessions in every quarter. To the golden bulls of the Eastern empire they added treaties with the Lombards which secured to them the most favoured position in the markets of the mainland. Later on, Charlemagne conceded special rights in the Frankish markets of Italy, among which was the celebrated market of Campalto on the borders of the lagoon. Lothair, Charlemagne's son, allowed free transit to Venetians and Venetian goods on every river and through all his territories, with exemption from dues, except wharfage, and granted free access to all ports of the empire. These concessions were renewed by Charles the Fat, in 883, who relieved the Doge Giovanni Partecipazio and his heirs from all customs dues.<sup>1</sup> Other treaties follow—with the communes and sovereigns of Italy, with the Germans, with the Fatimites of Egypt, with the Abbassides of Syria, with the lords of Cordova, with the sultans of Maghreb, and with Barbary generally. The astute Venetians were large in promises, but scanty in fulfilment. They showed their cleverness in eluding all claims not sanctioned by commercial treaties, and were ever ready to fly to arms to repel by force every attempt to interfere with their interests.<sup>2</sup> They engaged in fierce struggles with the troublesome Slav pirates, with Narentines and Hungarians, with the towns of Comacchio and Ravenna, with the Marquis of Istria, who had rebelled against his superior and sought the protection of the Republic.<sup>3</sup> From all these wars, waged with varying fortune, the growing city emerged with new and important gains. /

<sup>1</sup> Böhmer, *Reg. Carol.*, p. 957.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Diacono, *Chr.*

<sup>3</sup> Manfroni, *St. della Marina It.*, Vol. I, p. 71. Livorno, 1899.

Under the Doge Pietro Orseolo II (991), who strengthened the commercial bonds with the emperors of the East, with the Saracens in Sicily and Africa, with the Emperor Otho III in Germany,<sup>1</sup> and by his conquests in Dalmatia paved the way for the dominion of the Gulf, Venice shared commercial supremacy in the East and West with Amalfi, whose prosperity began to decline toward the close of the eleventh century. While Amalfi sent her goods to Spain, to parts of France, and to lower Italy, Venice traded also in France, in Germany, and northern Italy.<sup>2</sup> The lagoons from Grado to the mouths of the Po, connected with the centre of Italy by rivers and navigable canals, and lying on the borders of Germany and the Danubian Provinces, were the indispensable route of communication between Greeks and Arabs and northern Italy, Germany, and France. Hungarians, Bulgarians, Bosniacs, Albanians, Croats, Poles, Germans, Spaniards, Flemings, English, all flocked to the lagoons to buy and sell.<sup>3</sup> During the bitter winter of 860 the lagoons were frozen and the foreign merchants came to Rialto, not in boats but in wagons.

The Venetians exported to Constantinople wood, pig-iron, and wrought iron, grain, woollens, salted meat, salt, and imported merchandise of far higher value.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kohlschutter, *Venedig unter dem Herzog Peter II Orseolo*, Part II. Göttingen, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> On a capital of the lower loggia of the Ducal Palace are represented some of the nations with whom Venice traded: Latins, Tartars, Turks, Hungarians, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians.

<sup>4</sup> The goods imported from the East were more especially cloves, cinnamon, pepper, cassia, saffron, ginger, indigo, sandalwood, sulphur, amber, musk, bezoar, gallnuts, ivory, incense, myrrh, storax, alum, camphor, cardamon, logwood, sugar, wax, unwrought metal, cotton, velvet, carpets,

The receipts from export were eight times greater than the receipts from import dues at Constantinople. It is possible that sometimes Venetian merchants received goods on credit from Greek commercial houses, and at their own risk and peril sold them in Italy and other European countries.<sup>1</sup> From the East too came that delicate jeweller's work upon which the Venetians made so large a profit, especially in the cities of western France, such as Limoges.<sup>2</sup> The ships of the Republic touched on the coast of Morocco and ploughed the waters of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff; at Tana they took in cargoes of pitch, hemp, and other things necessary for shipbuilding, and bought the loot which the Tartars plundered in India or in China. The annual profits on this trade amounted to 47,000 ducats of gold each year.<sup>3</sup>

When the old and decrepit Eastern empire, threatened by the adventurous Normans, already lords of lower Italy, turned to the growing nation of the lagoons for help, the Venetians at once perceived that if Greece fell, as Apulia had fallen, into the hands of the Northmen, their trade with the East, the chief source of all their wealth, was at an end.<sup>4</sup> They had every reason, therefore, to wish to curb the Norman power; and on the promise of ample recompense, they accepted the Emperor Alexius' invitation (1082). After a long struggle,

taffeta, ermine, cloth of gold, webs of all kinds, silk, dyed wools, wines, perfumes, pearls, jewels, and many other precious objects of luxury. Rawdon Brown, *Calendar*, Vol. I, p. cxxxv. London, 1864.

<sup>1</sup> Gröner, XXIX.

<sup>2</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, *Dict. raisonné du mob.*, T. III, Part VII, pp. 82, 83.

<sup>3</sup> Filiasi, *op. cit.*, *Saggio*, T. VI. Scherer, *Histoire du commerce de toutes les nations*, T. I, pp. 194, 198. Paris, 1857.

<sup>4</sup> Armingaud, *Venise et le Bas-Empire* (*Arch. des missions scientifiques*, Ser. II, T. IV, p. 359).



carried on with varying fortune, Byzantium was saved by Venice, which received, as a reward, privileges of the widest character (1084): her dominion over Dalmatia and Croatia was confirmed; she was granted a special quarter in Constantinople; many concessions were made to the clergy and to churches; Venetians were free to trade, in all manner of goods, in every part of the empire except Crete and Cyprus without paying customs, wharfing, or other dues.

Such was the height of power which Venice attained by the eleventh century. A contemporary poet, William of Apulia, who sang the Norman war, is no niggard in praise of Venice:

dives opum, divesque virorum,  
Qua sinus Adriacis interlitus ultimus undis  
Subjacet Arcturo. Sunt hujus moenia gentis  
Circumsepta mari; nec ab aedibus alter ad aedes  
Alterius transire potest, nisi lintre veliatur,  
Semper aquis habitant; gens nulla valentior ista  
Aequoreis bellis, ratiumque per aequora ductu.<sup>1</sup>

The majestic flow of Venetian commerce continues through the following period. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Venetian envoys renewed treaties, pacts, and conventions with the Greek empire and with the emperors of Germany alike; with Swabian and Angevin; with the Soldan of Egypt and the Sultan of Aleppo; with the Khan of Tartary; with the kings of Armenia and Servia; with Syria, Hungary, and Croatia; with the Duke of Carinthia and the Patriarch of Aquileia; with the Count of Biblos; with the cities of Verona, Padua, Treviso, Vicenza, Bologna, Mantua,

<sup>1</sup> Guilielmus Apulus, *Hist. poëma de rebus Normanorum*, Lib. IV (*Rer. It. Script.*, Vol. V, p. 72).



Ferrara, Ravenna, Osimo, Umana, Recanati, Castel Ficardo, etc.<sup>1</sup>

San Marco sent his children far afield in search of fortune, and the constitution of the Republic and even the very aspect of Venice herself were reproduced in foreign cities. Whole colonies of Venetians settled abroad and were protected by special laws and by their own consuls. When the office of consul was first created we do not know, but already in 1117 we find Teofilo Zeno first Venetian consul in Syria.<sup>2</sup> The consuls represented the Doge, and appointed vice-consuls, or *visdomini*, in the cities within their districts. They exacted a tax, called the *cottimo*, an ad valorem duty on all Venetian goods imported or exported; they watched over the well-being of the colony, acting either on their own immediate responsibility or on the advice of the resident nobles; they maintained friendly relations with the natives, and with other colonies; they resisted all threats or acts of violence, and were always ready wherever the interest or the honour of San Marco was at stake.<sup>3</sup>

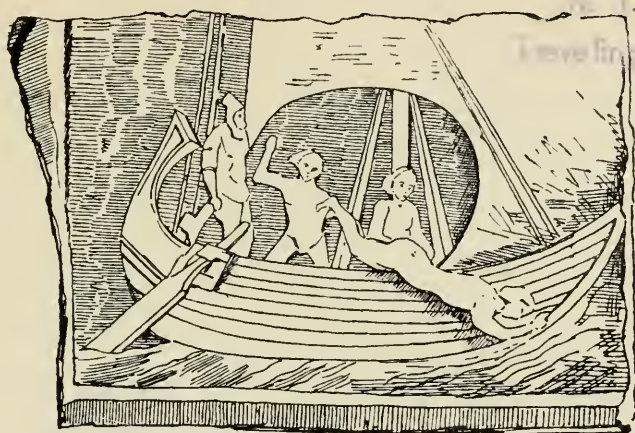
The astute management and subtle intelligence of the Venetians, applied especially at Constantinople and in the lands acquired by the Crusaders, where Venice owned markets governed by her own laws and administered by her own judges, led to an extension of her judicial authority even over the subjects of the nations with whom she traded.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lenel, *Die Entstehung der Vorherrschaft Venedigs an der Adria*, p. 48. Strassburg, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels und Staatsgeschichte der Rep. Ven.*, Vol. I, p. 77. (In the *Fontes Rer. austr.* Wien, 1856.)

<sup>3</sup> Zambler and Carabellese, *Le relaz. commerciali fra la Puglia e la Rep. di Ven.*, Vol. II, p. 20. Trani, 1898.

<sup>4</sup> Marin, *St. del Commercio dei Veneziani*, Vol. III, Lib. I, Cap. VIII. Venezia, 1800.



(A)



(B)



(C)

A—ACAZIA — bas-relief. (Museo Civico.)  
 B—Dromone. (Mosaics of S. Marco.) C—  
 Roscona—river boat. (Mosaics of S. Apol-  
 linare at Ravenna)



When Enrico Dandolo entered Constantinople as conqueror (1204), Venice, who held the fate of the East at her disposal, received as her share a quarter of the immense booty and a quarter of the territory which belonged to the empire. Prudently, and evidently on full, minute, and exact knowledge, she chose the coast lands best suited to her commerce.<sup>1</sup> She also obtained possession of three-eighths of Constantinople, with an arsenal and harbour, probably on the Golden Horn, toward the Palace of Blachernæ, the most favourable position.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the same century Venice secured the full command of the Adriatic. This supremacy was not based either upon imperial charter or upon her early imperfect conquest of Dalmatia (1000), which, as a matter of fact, was not brought into complete subjection till after the Hungarian invasion. It was due to the steady advance of Venice in political and commercial prosperity, in virtue of which all Italy recognised the trade superiority of the Venetians, who gradually repressed their competitors, especially in the traffic in foodstuffs.<sup>3</sup> Albertino Mussato calls Venice *dominatrix Adriaci maris*<sup>4</sup>; and by the middle of the fourteenth century the term, "the Gulf of Venice," was used to denote the upper part of the Adriatic.<sup>5</sup>

Vigour of arms, activity of trade, ability in handling affairs abroad, were fostered at home by provisions designed to guide, encourage, and protect commerce and navigation. The court *del Proprio*, before which came all commercial suits, was no longer able to cope

<sup>1</sup> Tafel and Thomas, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Heyd, *Hist. du commerce du Levant*, trad., Vol. I, p. 286. Lipsia, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Lenel, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>4</sup> Mussati, *De gestis Ital.* (*Rer. It. Script.*, Vol. X, p. 583).

<sup>5</sup> Lenel, *op. cit.*, p. 74.



with the work, and the pressure was relieved by establishing (1182) the court of the *Giudici del Comune*, to hear causes between private individuals and the treasury, and the *Giudici del Forestier*, to try suits between foreigners.<sup>1</sup> About the middle of the thirteenth century the office of *Consoli dei Mercanti* was created to settle questions of commerce; its powers afterwards passed to the *Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia*. The *Visdomini alla Messetaria*, or court for deciding disputed contracts, also belong to the thirteenth century.) They were also charged, as their name implies, with exacting the tax on the middlemen. In 1287, with a view to keeping a register of all merchandise that entered the city, the *ufficiali alle tre tavole d'introito* were called into being. One of the three registers was devoted to webs, another to goods in general, and the third to iron. The *Visdomini da mare* were charged with the exaction of the import duty on sea-borne merchandise, while the dues on oil, wood, foodstuffs, soap, and iron were drawn by the *quattro visdomini alla Ternaria*. The court of reprisals, established in the dugento and suppressed at the end of 1400, granted letters of marque to private persons to indemnify themselves from the property of the persons who had done them an injury. The *Cattaveri*, the *Giustizieri Vecchi*, and *Nuovi* were other magistracies designed to frame such commercial legislation as might seem necessary or prudent.

The Venetians drew all their prosperity from the sea, and to the sea they devoted their whole attention and care. When, on the slaughter of the Doge Michiel, in 1172, the constitution was reformed, careful provision was made on the subject of navigation. The lesser council was intrusted with the supervision of the

<sup>1</sup> Marin, op. cit., Vol. III, Lib. III, Cap. II.

mercantile marine as well as of the grain supply and finance. The arsenal, which was always considered as the stronghold of the community, was governed by the *Provveditori* or *Patroni all' arsenale*, an office of very ancient date; in 1490 the *Sopra Provveditori* were added.

The *Liber Communalis*, called also *Liber Plegiorum*, from the many deeds of surety it contains, furnishes us with many minute and curious details about the regulations which governed commerce and navigation. Import and export were subject to severe provisions; the public criers announced both at San Marco and Rialto that no Venetian was to buy or sell merchandise nor food in certain cities, nor to lade grain or wood in foreign ports for any destination other than Venice. The punishment for infringement was either heavy fines or even confiscation of goods and demolition of dwelling-houses.<sup>1</sup> If, as not unfrequently happened, the greed of gain proved stronger than the fear of the law, there were not wanting zealous citizens who would undertake to see that the law was obeyed. For example there was a law prohibiting the sale of wood in Egypt; a Venetian patrician on his way through a port of the Adriatic saw a ship laden with wood which he suspected to be destined for Egypt. Calling to him the skipper and crew, he made them swear anew the oath that they would obey the laws of the Republic.<sup>2</sup>

Smuggling was carefully watched; guard boats, with crews of men protected by iron corslets and belly-bands<sup>3</sup> patrolled the waters round the city, while cruisers swept the Adriatic and seized all ships laden

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Plegiorum*. Regesti del Predelli, n. 362, 372, 429, 433, 441, 483, 503.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 87, 283, 287, 395.

with contraband goods.<sup>1</sup> A fleet of light river boats was always ready to protect the river traffic.<sup>2</sup> The State was never remiss in insisting on its rights. For example, wishing to reorganise its salt trade, it not only sent its officers to Ravenna to insure the observance of the law,<sup>3</sup> but it actually employed force to prevent Bologna and the Marches of Ancona from drawing any advantage from the salt-pans of Comacchio and Cervia.<sup>4</sup> This salt trade was a most lucrative source of wealth, and its administration was intrusted to the *Salinieri del mare*, appointed in 1243, called later on the *Provveditori del sal*, an office of the highest importance intrusted with the up-keep of public buildings. There were two kinds of salt in Venice, the native, known as Chioggian salt, and the foreign, called *sal maris*, which came from Cervia, Istria, Dalmatia, Sicily, even from the Black Sea and from Barbary. Not only Italy, but also distant lands, depended on Venice for their salt. Caravans numbering forty thousand horse came every year from Hungary, Croatia, and eastern Germany to fetch Venetian salt from Istria.<sup>5</sup>

The iniquitous traffic in slaves was also a source of gain to Venice.<sup>6</sup> It flourished up to the eighth

<sup>1</sup> Filiasi, op. loc. cit., T. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Pasolini, *Doc. riguardanti antiche relazione fra Venezia e Ravenna*, p. 9. Imola, 1881.

<sup>4</sup> Filiasi, T. VI.

<sup>5</sup> Scherer, *Hist. du comm.*, pp. 293, 294.

<sup>6</sup> Caroldo, *Hist. Venetiana*. Gröner, VIII. Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, cit., Vol. I, p. 17. In the middle of the eighth century some Venetian merchants opened a slave market in Rome, and bought a large number to be sent to the Saracens in Africa. Pope Zaccaria, unwilling that Christians should be sold into slavery to pagans, collected a large sum of money and liberated the captives. Anastasii Bibliotecarii, *Hist. de vitis pontificum* (*Rer. Ital. Script.*, Vol. III, p. 164). In 850 the Veronese made



century. Slaves, for the most part Tartars, Russians, Saracens, Mingrelians, Bosniaes, Greeks, *de genere avogassiorum*, — that is, Circassians, — *de genere alanorum* (Teutons), were purchased from Slav or Saracenic pirates, and were resold—in spite of the *graves poenas contrafacientibus* recorded by Andrea Dandolo—at public auction both at San Giorgio and at Rialto. A woman, whether Circassian, Georgiana, or from those parts, if twelve, fourteen, or sixteen years of age and certified *sane ed integre dei loro membri occulti e manifesti*,<sup>1</sup> young boys, and grown men were sold, in the fourteenth century, for prices which ranged from sixteen golden ducats, equal to about 322, to eighty-seven ducats, equal to 2093 ducats.<sup>2</sup> In the archives at Venice there are entire volumes containing nothing but deeds relating to the sale and purchase, exchange, cession, and donation of slaves. These documents go back as far as the twelfth century<sup>3</sup> and it is curious to note that some were drawn up by notaries

a present to Venice of a gang of slaves who were destined to the service of the Ducal Palace and of the Doge Pietro Tradonico. Lazari, V., *Del traff. e del Cond. degli schiavi in Ven.* Torino, 1862. Orso Partecipazio I published a law forbidding the inhuman traffic, and in 960 Pietro Candiano IV prohibited the purchase and transport of slaves even if they were Jews. All prohibitions, however, were inefficacious, and trade in slaves was not only tolerated but even permitted by the State if it added to the *guadagnum in patria* or was made in the name of the Doge.

<sup>1</sup> *Sana omnibus suis membris, infirmitatibus et magagnis, tam publice quam occultis* (Arch. di Stato, Sez. Notarile, Atti Fuscule Nicolò, October 7, 1368, III, filza 4). *Sana a male caduco, a male capitis et brachiarum et tibiaram et corporis* (Istromento di compr. Vend. di una schiava tartara Ventenne. Atti Fuscule, March 31, 1372).

<sup>2</sup> At the Archivio di Stato (Arch. di San Zaccaria, *Estere*, nov. n. 6192) there is a deed of sale of a Saracen slave remaining over after the sale of other slaves made by Giannone Staniero and Domenico Contareno and others. The slave fetched 175 besants, — *de illo sclavo saracino quod nobis remansit post partitos alios*.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1393 and 1491 there are records of 150 sales of male and female slaves below the age of thirty-two.



who were actually priests, in defiance of the State, of Popes, and of councils.

Without going into details of trade with the East and more distant lands, the speeches of the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo (1413-1423), and especially the one he pronounced on his deathbed, suffice to prove how vigorous was the traffic with certain Italian cities. "The Florentines," says Mocenigo, "bring to Venice yearly 16,000 bales of the finest cloth which is sold in Naples, Sicily, and the East. They export wool, silk, gold, silver, raisins, and sugar to the value of 392,000 ducats in Lombardy. Milan spends annually in Venice 90,000 ducats; Monza, 56,000; Como, Tortona, Novara, Cremona, 104,000 ducats each; Bergamo, 78,000; Piacenza, 52,000; Alessandria della Paglia, 56,000; and in their turn they import into Venice cloth to the value of 900,000 ducats, so that there is a total turnover of 2,800,000 ducats. Venetian exports to the whole world represented annually ten million ducats; her imports amounted to another ten million. On these twenty millions she made a profit of four millions,<sup>1</sup> or interest at the rate of twenty per cent.

On the neighbouring mainland the Venetians began to frequent the markets of Mestre, Campalto, Oriago, Musestre, Portobuffoledo, and Portogruaro. At first they traded in salt and in grain, but presently extended their operations to other kinds of goods. In these markets they enjoyed particular immunities and exemptions, especially during the fair-time in the various cities, notably in Apulia. Thus Venetians came to take an important part in the commercial and industrial

<sup>1</sup> Mocenigo's speeches, admirable examples of commercial acumen, are inaccurately given in Sanudo's *Vite dei Dogi* (Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Script.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 942, 959, 960).

movement of the mainland and also in the banking business, which always goes hand in hand with industry and commerce.<sup>1</sup>

The city of Venice itself had its markets, called, in the fourteenth century, by the Persian word *bazar*, which we find in use in certain Venetian documents.<sup>2</sup> In the ninth century there was a flourishing market on the Campo di San Pietro at Castello. From the time of the Doge Domenico Contarini (1043-1070) this market was held on Saturdays.

From 1299 onwards there was a market at San Marco every Saturday; the names of the various trade guilds were cut on the pavement to mark the position of their stalls. Another market was held at San Giovanni Battista in Gemini, which from the Greek word *ἀγορά* (market) is said to have given the name of *Bragora* to the whole quarter. At San Polo there was a market, mentioned in the twelfth century. Most famous of all was the market of Rialto, whose admirable arrangement, — *honore nostri mercati*, — stalls, and sheds are recorded in 1097.<sup>3</sup> All this movement of business, this bustle, this throng of strangers, lent life and noise and the feverish gaiety of a festival to the city, and a poet of the early quattrocento has left us a quaint picture of the scene. He is extolling the power of

Veniexia franca, del mondo corona,  
donna del mare, del pian e del monte,

and he briefly describes her constitution, and then at length he dwells on her dominions, first in the lagoon,

<sup>1</sup> Zambler and Carabellese, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> A document of August, 1392, mentions certain objects *compradi a molti priexii in bazar de sabado*. Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Misti*, reg. VIII, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> In a deed of gift executed by the brothers Tisone and Pietro Orio (1097). *Codice Trevisano*, p. 118.

then in Istria, Dalmatia, and the Orient, lastly on the mainland. He goes on to relate, "come l'è posta e come là se vive."

Dentro si alberga d'ogni condizione  
zente Todesca, e Italici e Lombardi,  
e, se el bel dir non tardi,  
Franzesi e Borgognoni e molti Inglesi,

Ongari e Schiavi, de molti paesi  
Tartari, e Mori, e Albanesi e Turchi  
che vien con nave e burchi  
a far sua vita, e mai non se ne parte.

Italians from every province because

Chi vuol denari qui conven che passa  
perchè l'è fonte de molto texoro,  
e tanto arzento et oro  
se trova qui che par ch'esca de vena.

Both shores of the Adriatic, the Levant, and Naples  
send their wines in exchange; others, corn and fruit.

però con gran letizia  
possemo star nel mondo, a dir el vero.

Non è za carestia di pomo e pero.  
anzi i ven carghi i burci a onda a onda,  
sì che quasi se affonda  
e in sul ponte son spazadi adesso.

Then he gives us a picture of the riches at Rialto, where the shops display not merely the cinnamon and frankincense and arms and precious webs from the East, but also the humblest forms of food, fruit of every kind,<sup>1</sup> fish, meat from Istria and the mainland, game, fowls from Padua, and

luganega infinita  
e onto de porco con altre fossare;

<sup>1</sup> On the capital of one of the columns in the portico of the Ducal Palace the artist has carved the ordinary kinds of fruit: *Serexis*, *Piri*, *Cochumeris*, *Persici*, *Çuche*, *Moloni*, *Fici*, *Huva*.

then he adds

contar ve volgio de la condizione  
del navigar che fano le galie ;

and he proceeds to describe the various journeys they make and the rich merchandise they bring back :

Con gran trionfo torna i capitani  
tal che in Veniexia par che se ritrona  
al campanon che sona  
per l'alegreza che fan quela zente . . .

La zoventù par che vegna de Franza  
o Catalogna, o de strani paixi  
tanto sono devixi  
i lor vestidi de diversa foza.

Su per le banche di Rialto o in loza  
i vedi star con sue veste de setta  
che molto ben s'assetta,  
che par sian nati nello empireo regno.

Ognun de ben vestir se stima degno :  
el pover non cognosci dai mazori ;  
tutti me par signori  
stadi de terra o zitadi o castelli.

He concludes by praising again the policy of Venice and her allies, whom she has throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> At the close of the fourteenth century Gibbon declares that Venice had revived the commercial activity of Europe and touched the apogee of her opulence. The ships of the State, *armate in mercanzia*, brought annually from

<sup>1</sup> This *sirventese* has been attributed to Sanguinacci, a Paduan of the early quattrocento ; but it is perhaps safer to leave the authorship uncertain for the present. The poem is in 189 quatrains, woven together in the manner in vogue at the end of the thirteenth and during the whole of the fourteenth centuries. It was first printed at Treviso in 1483 and was reproduced by Gamba in 1839 (Venezia, Alvisopoli) in an opuscle *per nozze* (*Quatraine in lode di Venezia*) and again in his *Raccolta di poesie in dialetto veneziano*. The last strophe proves that the poem was written in May, 1420. Vittorio Rossi (*Nuovo Arch. Veneto*, T. V, p. 412, n.) calls attention to a MS. copy in the Marciana (Ital. XI, 124, pp. 19 et seq.).



overseas merchandise that represented upwards of forty millions of our modern lire; this capital paid interest at the rate of forty per cent, and there were then in Venice more than a thousand nobles whose incomes varied from two to five hundred thousand Italian lire.<sup>1</sup> Another great source of wealth was the shipbuilding industry. It grew steadily in numerical importance and in perfection,<sup>2</sup> as was natural in a city which at the close of the fourteenth century could number thirty-six thousand seamen, sixteen thousand arsenal hands, and thirty-three hundred ships on the sea.<sup>3</sup> During the flourishing days of the Republic all the talk was of ventures by sea; sometimes the Doge himself took the command; a patrician always filled the post of captain-general, the highest post in the service. The commanders were clad in armour, and in later times had a uniform corresponding to their conspicuous rank, — a jacket and cap of crimson velvet, a mantle of cloth of gold, with a great gold button on the right shoulder. As time went on, new posts were created, such as the *Provveditore Generale da Mar* or *Capitano del Levante*, whose headquarters were at Corfu; the *Provveditore d'Armata*; the *Capitano in Golfo*, charged with the patrol of the Adriatic. As to their land forces, the Venetians did not take them into consideration until the period when they turned to create a dominion on the mainland.

In the infancy of the city the *acazie*, *gundulae*, *scaule*, *plateae* (*burchi* and *peate*) served for trade with the

<sup>1</sup> Speech of the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo.

<sup>2</sup> The *Liber Plegiorum* gives us, between 1223 and 1228, several estimates for ships. The wood required for building a galley cost 170 lire, 333 lire for an *asiro*. Masts nine paces in length cost five lire a pair. A boat cost 18 lire; a galley, 650; a galleon, 700.

<sup>3</sup> Speech of Doge Mocenigo.

less remote portions of the estuary ; at the end of their voyage they were tied to the quays or laid up in boat-houses. The *cursorie*, *oleadi*, and *roscone* served the river communications and even sometimes put out to sea. *Dromoni*, *galee*, *panfili*, and *chelandie*, ships of war frequently mentioned in those remote times, must have resembled the ships in use among other peoples of that date down to the time of the Crusades. They were all propelled by oar and had beaks ; the prow had a castle above it.<sup>1</sup> The name of the galley becomes more frequent about the eleventh century. The galley was propelled by oars, first of all two to each bench, then three and even four, so that they took the classical names of triremes and quadriremes. It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that they adopted the single oar, forty or fifty feet long, rowed by four, five, six, seven, or even eight<sup>2</sup> men. Galleys for the most part had only one mast, which could be unstepped when in action. In the tops was the crow's nest (*gabbia*) for the outlook (*sguaita*). Often amidships there was a *castello*, guarded by slingers (*frombolieri*) and bowmen (*balestrieri*) ; all round the bulwarks ran the *impavesata*, made of leather bucklers to keep off Greek fire ; on the prow were boatloads of stones to be hurled from the tops, catapults, crossbows, balistae, and other engines for launching stones. Up to the middle of the thirteenth century there were two great side-oars on the ship's quarters which acted as a rudder ; we find indications, but not very clear,<sup>3</sup> of the use of the single wheel rudder.

<sup>1</sup> Guglielmotti, *St. della Marina Pontificia nel M. E.*, Lib. I, Cap. XV. Firenze, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Fincati, *Le triremi*. Roma, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> Manfroni, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Appendix, Cap. I.

The *gatti*, ships driven by a hundred oars, were heavier in build than the *galee sottili* or battle galley. The *taride* were used for transport of men, the *uscieri* and the *coche* for conveying horses, provisions, and siege train.<sup>1</sup> Among warships we must mention the *bucio*, propelled either by sails or by oars, and a small rowing vessel of light draught for transport and perhaps for boarding purposes, as we may conclude from its name of *ganzaruolo* or hooking-boat (from *ganzo*, *gancio*, a hook).

The "great galleys," (*galee grosse*), were merchant ships with two masts, each of which carried three lateen-sails (*artimonum*, *terzariolum*, and *papaficum*, top-sail). They had a larger freeboard and were of greater tonnage than the *taride*. They were used for purposes of trading, but if necessary could fight.<sup>2</sup> (Other smaller merchant-service ships were the *asiri*, the *panzone*, the *marsiliane*, the *palandre*, the *marrani*, and so on.) Carpaccio's pictures give us specimens.<sup>3</sup>

The State undertook the regulation not only of the arsenal, but also of private building-yards. Orders were sometimes issued forbidding any shipwright (*marangonus*) or caulkers (*calafato*) to leave Venice, or to seek work elsewhere, without leave from the government. No Venetian might build a ship inside the limits of the Dogado unless it conformed to the following measurements: length of keel, fifty-six feet; sheer, thirty-four feet; deck-beam, twenty-four feet; depth, nine feet; width of keel bottom left open.<sup>4</sup> Thus the

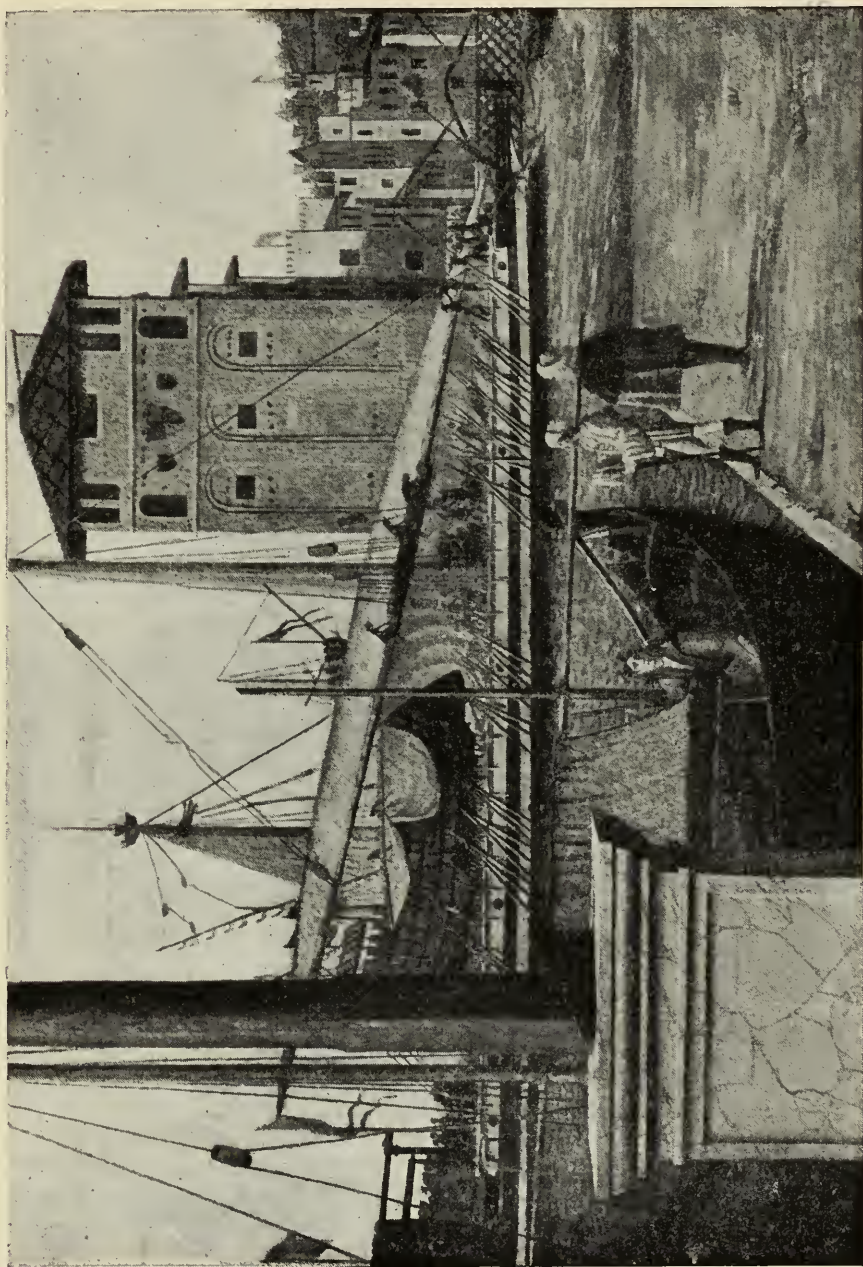
<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, op. loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See also the drawings of G. Culluris in C. A. Levi's *Navi Venete da codici e marini dipinti*. Venezia, 1892. We reproduce some of these sketches.

<sup>4</sup> *Lib. Pleg.*, n. 700.





TRIESTE — detail from a picture by Carpaccio in the  
Sa. Orsola series. (Academy of Venice)





State, having at its disposal a large number of sister ships capable of being converted at a moment's notice into a war fleet, was able to repair its naval losses with marvellous rapidity.

Besides the privately owned<sup>1</sup> ships which traded in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic there were fixed trading routes for which the State supplied galleys fitted out at the public expense. They were found in arms and ammunition and victuals, were put up to public auction and adjudicated to the highest Venetian bidder.<sup>2</sup> The orders as to lading<sup>3</sup> were numerous, complex, and rigorous, as were the sailing regulations which governed officers and crew.<sup>4</sup>

The man who hired a government ship attended to the lading of her and often took the command of her himself, after swearing that on all occasions he would maintain *l'onor del Comune e di San Marco*, and would abide by the prescribed route. These government fleets, *flotte armate in mercanzia*, sailed in company (*mude*) and were divided into squadrons (*carovane*) of eight or ten galleys, each under a commander who was responsible for the safety of his squadron, as the seas were infested by pirates and no port was really to be trusted; indeed, ships frequently had to enter port

<sup>1</sup> The *Liber Plegiorum* records various names of ships: *San Pietro*, *San Biagio*, *San Cataldo*, *Angelo*, *Santa Savina*, *Scarlatta*, *Cavalera*, *Perla*, *Verga d'oro*, *Calelonga*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For example, on March 24, 1332, Andreolo Giustinian hired the tenth galley, the last of the fleet that was destined for Flanders. It cost him 75 *lire di grossi*. The first galley of the same fleet, which was knocked down to Zaccaria Contarini, was the dearest of all; it cost 81 *lire di grossi*. The third on the list, hired by Ser Michele Scazo, was the cheapest, costing 65 *lire*. Arch. di Stato, Senato, *Misti*, reg. 15, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Capitulare navium* of the Doge Ziani, published by Sacerdoti e Predelli, cit.

<sup>4</sup> Arch. di Stato, Senato, *Misti* (January 22, 1303), reg. I, pp. 187, 188.

stern foremost and with their crossbow men on guard, so as to be ready to fight or to fly.<sup>1</sup>

The fleet sailed and returned with a full cargo after bartering the entire contents in various ports. These fleets were called after their destinations; for example, the Tana fleet, which made for the Black Sea and traded with Russians and Tartars; the Syrian fleet, which dealt with Asia Minor; the Roumanian fleet, destined for Constantinople and the ports of Greece and Roumania; the Egyptian fleet, touching at the ports of Egypt; and lastly the Flanders fleet, which sailed by Tripoli and Tangiers, touched Spain, passed the Straits of Gibraltar, coasted Morocco, and then passing up the shores of Portugal and France, reached Bruges, Antwerp, and London.

The commanders of each galley, called *comili* from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, and then *sopra-comili*, were elected one by one in the Great Council or in the Senate.<sup>2</sup> They took an oath to have every care of the ship, and to hand it over in sound condition, at the arsenal, on their return. They were bound to remain on board from the day they began to lade, to watch over the safety of the cargo, to see that the crew had their rations of bread, wine, and meat, to keep the ship's accounts, and in all things to consider the advantage of the State.<sup>3</sup> They were at liberty to choose their own pilot and crew—the best they could find,<sup>4</sup> but they were responsible for the efficiency and honesty of the men

<sup>1</sup> Barberino, *Documenti d'amore* (Riv. Marittima. Roma, February, 1878).

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, M. C. (February 22, 1294), *Cerberus*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Atti dei Procuratori di San Marco*, from the archives of the amalgamated pious foundations (Serie Mista, B<sup>a</sup> 317).

<sup>4</sup> *Lib. Pleg.*, n. 580.

they selected<sup>1</sup>; they were also bound to find the crew in weapons.<sup>2</sup>

Owners were obliged to promise that they would never let nor sell their ships to any but Venetians, and to exact the same obligation from those to whom they consigned the ship; they were bound to report the sale of a ship, and if that had taken place outside Venice, they were required to put in an affidavit of the oath administered to the purchasers.<sup>3</sup> A high sense of honour and a noble zeal animated the ships' captains—men who were brave soldiers, skilled mariners, vigilant not to waste their nights in harbour where, as a rule, they made but a brief stay.<sup>4</sup> Cautious in making up their minds, bold in execution, they faced all risks, and voyages which might well seem foolhardy to the most enterprising of modern seamen were undertaken by them for the honour of their country and in full reliance on their men, who were free, active, faithful, and obedient. For in the galleys of San Marco the crews, even to the oarsmen, were free citizens of Venice or of her subject lands, and the galleys themselves were called by a name of happy augury, —*volontarie* or

<sup>1</sup> "Capitanei galeae debeant dicere probitatem et utilitatem Comitorum, Naucliciorum et Proderiorum." Arch. di Stato, M. C., *Cerberus* (August 10, 1278).

<sup>2</sup> "Patroni teneantur habere pro quolibet marinaro unam lanceam de fao (faggio) vel de fraxino longam a quindecim pedibus supra: media cum ferris longis et media cum rampinis, omnes ferratae de lame per passum unum ad minus." Legge del 1279 cit. da Zanetti, G., *Orig. di alcune arti*, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Lib. Pleg.*, n. 649.

<sup>4</sup> Fincati, *Splend. e decad. della marina mercantile di Venezia* (*Riv. Marit.*, Roma, May, 1878). To prove the rapidity of Venetian navigation, Fincati cites the case of the galley commanded by Ser Andrea Arian, which, in 1408, sailed for the Holy Land with pilgrims on board. She left Venice in July and reached Jaffa in August, covering 1600 miles in thirty-three days, quite as good sailing as any modern merchantman could accomplish.



galleys *di libertà*. It was only about the middle of the sixteenth century that ships began to be rowed by slaves and condemned prisoners and took the names of *sforzate* or *di condannati*. (The freemen enrolled for service at the oar were known as *scapoli*, to distinguish them from the slaves.) But in the glorious days of the Venetian marine the hardy seamen of the Adriatic, and the honest boatmen of the lagoons, swarmed to the quays, and being well-paid and having the right to carry a certain quantity of merchandise duty free, they offered their services willingly and went aboard cheerfully, chanting a hymn to Saint Phocas, whose image was exposed for their protection in stormy weather. A strange custom is recorded in ancient documents which serves to illustrate the sound and simple manners of the time. Tradition says that seamen were wont to invite Saint Phocas to dinner every day during a voyage. Naturally, the saint did not appear, but the worth of his food was daily laid aside and the money was distributed among the poor as soon as the ship reached port.<sup>1</sup> A mere legend, doubtless, but it gives us a pleasing picture of the good heart of these seamen who on all occasions and in the most distant and inhospitable regions held it their bounden duty to spend their substance and their very life for the public weal and the honour of their country.

And not merely the seamen, but modest merchants like Maffeo, Niccolo and Marco Polo, powerful patricians like Marin Sanudo Torsello, and the brothers Niccolò and Antonio Zeno, vied with each other in the same proud devotion to and passionate regard for the honour of their distant home. They braved the floods and brought their ships through stormy seas; with hearts strung

<sup>1</sup> Zappert, *Vita Beati Petri Acotanti*, p. 77. Wien, 1839.

high by hope they touched on unknown shores, and on their return they committed to writing their observations and their knowledge as an incentive and a lesson for their sons. These reports, with their convincing picture of the physical aspect of distant lands, interspersed with observations on the religion, customs, language, and commerce of the natives or with rectifications of existing charts and maps, are effective in their simplicity, are rich in profound considerations, and prove that many a time the writer, the philosopher, the merchant, and the statesman were to be found fused in the person of the Venetian trader.

That admirable book, *Il Milione*, dictated in a Genoese prison by Marco Polo to Rusticiano da Pisa (1298), in which the immortal traveller appears to be a mere romancer, though modern criticism has proved him nearly always veracious and frequently profound in his observations, has preserved for us his discoveries and explorations in Tartary, China, and the East Indies, where he became the chief adviser of the most powerful sovereign in Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Marin Sanudo Torsello's<sup>2</sup> book, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis super Terrae Sanctae recuperationum*, was begun in 1306 and presented to Pope John XXII in 1321. Sanudo, who was born in 1270 and died in 1343, made no less than five journeys to the East. He visited Armenia, Egypt, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Saint Jean d'Acre. His object in writing was to rouse Christendom to a great crusade and to urge the Venetians to conquer

<sup>1</sup> Zurla, *Di Marco Polo e degli altri viaggiatori Veneziani*. Venezia, Picotti, 1818. Yule, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*. London, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> The family of Marin Sanudo, not to be confounded with that of the diarist of the sixteenth century, received the title of Duke of Naxos from the Republic. In the fourteenth century it inherited the nickname of Torsello from the family of the Basaniti.

Egypt, on which he held that the empire of the entire Orient depended. This book, which Marco Foscarini calls the origin of statistical studies, is a treatise in three parts; extraordinarily rich, considering its date, in observations on geography, navigation, commerce, and political economy.<sup>1</sup> The first part indicates the way in which the Saracens can be attacked and suppressed; the second lays down rules to be followed by the military leaders; the third explains how the Holy Land is to be kept when once conquered. Among many valuable observations and many new ideas the author launches the bold conception of a continental system similar to that which Napoleon<sup>2</sup> developed as a menace to England. An appendix describes the charts and maps contained in the work.<sup>3</sup>

Side by side with these two great travellers, Marco Polo and Marin Sanudo, we must not forget that bold friar from Friuli, the Blessed Oderico da Pordenone, who, between 1318 and 1330, traversed Asia from the shores of the Black Sea to the limits of China, and has left an account of his journey.<sup>4</sup>

Towards the close of the fourteenth century Niccolò Zeno, sailing towards Flanders, was cast away on an island which he calls the island of Friesland, by which he means the Farøe isles. He stayed there some time and was well received by the Prince called Zichmi.

<sup>1</sup> It was published by Bongars in Vol. II of the *Gesta Dei per Francos*. Hannover, 1611.

<sup>2</sup> Quadri, *St. della statistica dalle sue orig. alla fine del sec. XVIII*, p. 96. Venezia, 1824.

<sup>3</sup> Simonsfeld, *Zur M. Sanudo den älteren*. Hannover, 1881. Magno-cavallo, *Marin Sanudo il Vecchio*. Bergamo, 1902. *La carta "de mare Mediterraneo"* di M. S. (in the *Bollett. Soc. Geog. It.*, fasc. V. Roma, 1903).

<sup>4</sup> Domenichelli, *Sopra la vita e biaggi del B. Oderico da Pordenone*. Prato, 1881.



Niccolò wrote to his brother Antonio, describing the islands and urging him to come. Niccolò died four years after the arrival of Antonio, who remained ten years longer in the service of Zichmi and then returned to Venice. The voyages of the brothers are described in the letters from Niccolò to Antonio and in the subsequent correspondence between Antonio and a third brother, the celebrated Carlo Zeno. Niccolò gives a detailed account of an exploration he made in Greenland, and he records the remarks of some fisherfolk on two districts of North America called Estotiland and Drogho. These prove the existence of those Scandinavian colonies mentioned by Adam of Bremen in the eleventh century and by Oderico Vitale<sup>1</sup> in the twelfth — a whole century before Columbus. Antonio's manuscript was torn up by a child named Niccolò, one of his descendants, and it was by the merest chance that some few scraps of the precious papers survived. These allowed the culprit Niccolò, when he grew up, to repair the injury he had wrought by compiling, in 1558, the narrative we now possess. Niccolò also made a copy of the map, almost obliterated by time, whereon are shown the northern archipelago and the coasts of Norway and Greenland.<sup>2</sup> /

<sup>1</sup> Mayor, *Dei viaggi dei fratelli Zeno*, trad. (*Arch. Veneto*, T. VII, p. 306).

<sup>2</sup> To the old investigations we must add the modern studies of the Danish archæologists, such as Rafn and others. Recently Professor Brugge discovered and deciphered a runic inscription in Norway, and came to the conclusion that the Norwegian colony of the tenth century, called Vinland, was Nova Scotia (*Bibliothèque Univ. et Revue Suisse*, p. 643, December, 1902). But far earlier than this discovery, and even before the early chart (1482-1486) found by the Jesuit Fischer in the Castle of Wolfegg in Wirtemberg, in which Greenland is given as the name of a tract of the American continent, it was known that Niccolò Zeno had touched the coasts of Newfoundland and of New England.



Niccolò de' Conti,<sup>1</sup> about the year 1424, left Venice with his wife, who presently died of the plague, and four sons. He crossed Arabia, Petrea, and reached the Euphrates, descending that river to the Persian Gulf and sailing thence for India, where he arrived at the Gulf of Malabar and eventually came to the Ganges. After five and twenty years he came back to Venice. The account of his journey was taken down by Poggio Bracciolini and published in Latin. In 1500 it was translated into Portuguese and then into Italian by Ramusio.

They are like wandering souls under an unknown sky, these bold navigators. In 1431 Pietro Quirini, accompanied by Niccolò Michiel and Cristoforo Fioravanti, set sail from Crete, crossed the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, but met with a terrific storm which swept them here and there, till finally, on January 4, 1432, after a desperate struggle, they touched an unknown land, where, according to Ramusio's edition of the report, from May 20 to August 20 it is always day, and from November 20 to February 20 it is always night. The place was probably the Loffoden islands, called Santi and Rustene, the modern Sandoë and Röst. Having lost his ship, Quirini in 1432 traversed Scandinavia and came back to Venice.<sup>2</sup>

In 1445 the patrician Alvise da Cà da Mosto, only twenty-three years of age, gave to the world an account of his voyages to Madeira, the Canaries, Capo Bianco, Senegal, and lastly to the Cape Verde Islands, which he discovered. Catarino Zeno (1471) and Ambrogio

<sup>1</sup> Some students affirm that Niccolò de' Conti and Giovanni Cabotto were natives of Chioggia. Bullo, *La vera patria di N. de' C. e di G. C.* Chioggia, 1880. Bellemo, *Viaggi di N. de' C.* Milano, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Bullo, *Il viaggio di M. Piero Querini*, Venezia, 1881, and Pennesi, *Viaggio del magnifico messer Piero Quirino* (*Boll. della Soc. Geograf. It.*, p. 812. Roma, 1885).





Contarini (1474) drew up reports of their journeys in Persia, and Giosafatte Barbaro (1472) of his journey to Tana, Russia, Tartary, and Persia. All over the globe these Venetians, patrician or plebeian, merchant or artist, carried their unwearying activity and their acute intelligence, so that even in Abyssinia we hear of a Francesco Brancaleone (1434) and of a certain Bencini (1482), Venetian painters, who lived at the court of the king and decorated some of the Christian churches.

In short, all that had to do with navigation claimed the patient care of the Venetians,<sup>1</sup> who were the first in Italy to establish public readings in algebra and to create chairs of mathematics as applied to navigation, to publish treatises on the same subject, and above all to cultivate the science of geography.<sup>2</sup> Competent judges believe that the atlas, probably dating from the end of the thirteenth century, the property of Luxoro of Genoa, which, along with the Pisan chart in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, is the oldest example of an Italian navigation chart, must be attributed to a Venetian.<sup>3</sup> For proof of the wealth of geographical maps in Venice of the trecento, we have only to look at the maps of Sanudo Torsello, the charts of Francesco Pizigani (1373),<sup>4</sup> and those which were owned by Nicolò de

<sup>1</sup> Toaldo, *Saggi di studi veneti*. Venezia, 1782. Formaleoni, *Saggio sulla naut. ant. dei Ven.* Venezia, 1866.

<sup>2</sup> In 1444 Piero di Versi wrote the treatise *Alcune raxion dei marineri*, one of the earliest tracts on navigation. Morelli, J., *Nota alla lettera di Cr. Colombo* (see *Operette*, V. I, p. 288. Venezia, 1820). Berchet, *Portolani esistenti nelle principali bibl. di Venezia*. Venezia, 1866.

<sup>3</sup> *Saggio di cartografia della regione Veneta*. Introd. del Marinelli (Atti della Dep. Ven. di St. Patria, 1881). Marinelli, *Venezia nella storia della geogr. cartogr. ed esploratrice* (Atti dell' Istituto Veneto, T. VIII, Ser. VI, pp. 944, 955. Venezia, 1888-89).

<sup>4</sup> On one of these is written "Mcccclxxiij adi viij di zugno Francescho Piziganus veniziano in Veniexia me fecit." The table here reproduced



Combitis, drawn later than 1375<sup>1</sup>; the portolano of Giacomo Giraldi, dated 1426<sup>2</sup>; the atlas of Andrea Bianco, dated 1448, especially noteworthy as it includes the Antilles and the outline of Africa<sup>3</sup>; the planisphere of Giovanni Leardo of Vicenza, dated 1452,<sup>4</sup> and so on.

A supreme monument of cosmography was completed between the years 1457 and 1459 by a Camaldolese monk, of the Island of San Michele, Fra Mauro, author of the planisphere,<sup>5</sup> which was preserved down to 1811 at San Michele and then removed to the Ducal Palace, where it now is. Fra Mauro must have based his great work on the voyages of Niccolò de' Conti.

There seems to have been in men's minds the presentiment of a new world on the point of being discovered.

represents geographico-astronomical figures—Genoa in the centre of the right-hand figure, Venice in the centre of the left. In the explanations mention is made of the war of Chioggia; the chart, therefore, cannot be earlier than 1381. The original is in the Ambrosiana, S. P. II 2. Fischer, *Sammlung mittelalterlicher Welt- und Seekarten Italienischen Bibliotheken und Archiven*. Venedig, 1886.

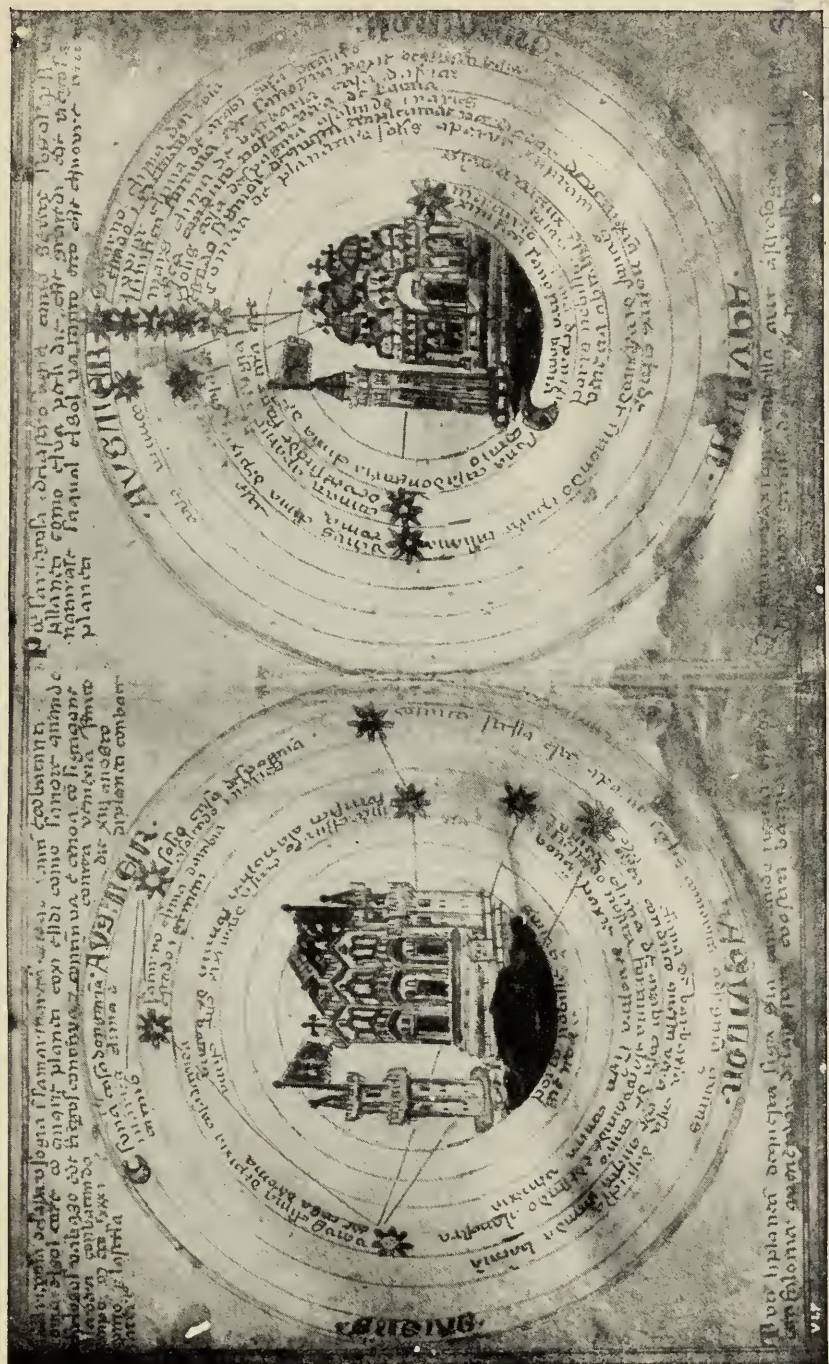
<sup>1</sup> Carta di Nicolo de Combitis: "Haec tabule ex testamento domini Nicolai de Combitis devenit in monasterio Cartusiae florentinae." The table represents the Adriatic and the Mediterranean and gives topographical indications of Venice. The original is in the Marciana. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> We have four atlases of Giacomo Giraldi; the earliest is in the Marciana (Cl. VI, 212). The table gives a clear idea of both shores of the Adriatic. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

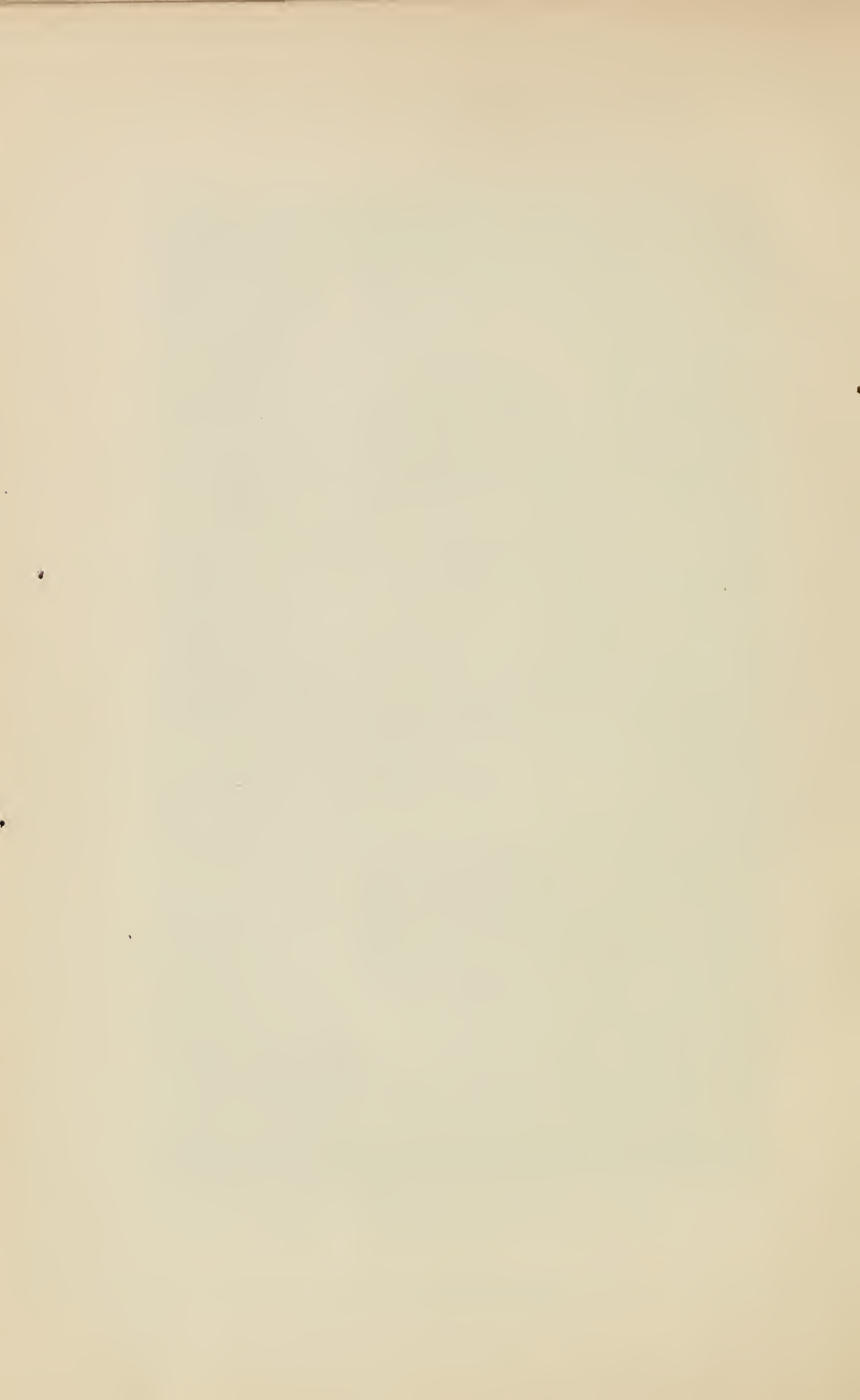
<sup>3</sup> "Andrea Bianco Venician comito di galia mi fexe a Londra Mccccxxxvij." The original is in the Ambrosiana (F. 260 inf.) and contains the latest Portuguese discoveries. Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> "Iohannes Leardus me fecit ab anno domini 1452." The original, which belonged to the Trevisan family, was thought to be lost. It was found and acquired by F. de Pilat, Austrian Consul in Venice. It has a higher value than the other planisphere by the same author, now in the Museo Civico of Vicenza. Berchet, *Il Planisfero di Giovanni Leardo dell' anno 1452*. Venezia, 1880.

<sup>5</sup> Zurla, *Il mappamondo di fra Mauro Camaldolese*. Venezia, 1806. Also *Sulle antiche carte idro-geogr. lavorate in Ven.* Venezia, 1818.



GENOA AND VENICE — CHART OF FRANCESCO PIZIGANI (XIV CENTURY). (AMBROSIANA)



This burning aspiration towards unknown lands left its impress no less upon the bold adventures of seafarers than upon the labours of the student and the measures of the government. The government, as a matter of fact, displayed in public maps — *descriptiones orbis sive map-pamundus* — in which, long before the discovery of America, the ocean was represented as stretching from the western shores of Spain to the eastern shores of China, — a vague and formless precursor of the considerations which led Columbus to attempt the western route to the Indies.<sup>1</sup> So, too, the planisphere of Fra Mauro, which gives us all the globe as known down to the middle of the fifteenth century, contains a presage of the future. South of Africa he has drawn a little ship with her prow pointing eastward towards Asia, the humble harbinger of a great idea which passed across the mind of the lowly friar long before it flashed upon the famous explorers that it might be possible to turn the southern point of Africa and make a fair voyage from Europe to the Indies. Some years later the idea became fact, and Bartolomeo Diaz rounded the Cape. The trust and the hope that lay behind this arduous enterprise both sprang from the hermitage islet of the Venetian lagoon.

<sup>1</sup> Morelli, J., op. cit., p. 299.



## CHAPTER VI

### FINANCE, ECONOMY, CURRENCY

**I**N the early life of States which are destined to assert their superiority during the course of their history, we find that a mass of institutions, in the constitutional as well as in the economical order, is gradually formed upon original lines by the genius of the race. Such institutions contain the germ of what we call later on political science. The economical institutions of Venice preceded by a long time the science of economists, just as Roman law was fully developed before the science of jurisprudence came into being. It often happens that the people create laws and lay down principles earlier than science discovers and illustrates them. So it is with early poems, which the people evolve and which their rhapsodists chant long before they write them down.

Whoever studies closely the economic acumen displayed by Venice in her banking regulations, in the State support of trade and industry, in the constitution of her trade- and craft- guilds, in the government of her colonies, — which served England as a model for the liberal administration of her own, — in the care for the mercantile marine as a powerful reserve for her navy, will find himself confronted by a series of economic problems already solved by the genius of the Venetian race long before they appear in the works of scientific economists. The people had already sought inspiration from itself,

and in its trade, exchange, and regulation of credit it followed instinctively the development of new and sound ideas. It is no easy task for the scientific student of Venetian economics to set forth theoretically all that this race conceived and carried into execution with such ease and spontaneity.

In Venice economic policy takes the place of political economy. She cultivated statistics, regarding them as the science which, in conjunction with history, is best able to supply the statesman with suggestions as to the line of legislation suited to the need of the moment. If there is a defect of research on the purely abstract side of economics, we find on the other hand abundant experiment in the region of practical economics. If Venice is poor in scientific economists, she is rich in economic statesmen trained by office to be experts in all that touches the economy of the State. In Venice, earlier than in any other country, they understood perfectly well that an accurate knowledge of economic facts must precede any scientific investigation of those facts, and every effort was made to render that knowledge complete and veracious. The reports of Venetian ambassadors, the works of Marin Sanudo Torsello, and the famous discourse of the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo<sup>1</sup> are monuments of civic wisdom, inimitable in the profundity of their knowledge of men and things and for the direct vigour of their form. It is certainly remarkable to note the way in which the public wealth, amassed by commerce, by navigation, and by martial valour, was administered with prudent parsimony by the wisdom of the government. A

<sup>1</sup> Pecchio, *Storia dell' economia pubblica in Italia*, p. 11. Lugano, 1849. Blanqui, *Histoire de l'Économie politique*, Vol. I, p. 270. Paris, 1860. Musatti, *La st. pol. di Venezia secondo le ultime ricerche*, p. 207. Padova, 1897.

system of efficient control, a variety of rigorous yet beneficent offices, destined to watch over the collection, the custody, and the distribution of the public funds, lastly a series of prudent enactments, such as the law *de ligacione pecuniae*, intended to limit within a fixed sum the amount of normal expenses which might be voted and spent by the Doge and the Minor Council,<sup>1</sup> — such was the machinery.

The Treasury was called the *Camera Palatii*, or simply *Palatium*. The *gastaldi* and *missi de palatio* collected the taxes and exacted dues. Before the compilation of the valuation roll (*Estimo*) begun, perhaps, in the thirteenth century,<sup>2</sup> the public burdens and private dues in Venice cannot have been very different from those in common use throughout Europe in the middle ages; they were, however, less severe than in many countries, although, according to some of the chronicles, the taxgatherers had recourse to cuffs and blows to exact the dues.<sup>3</sup> Later on, but at a date not determined, the collection of taxes was intrusted to

<sup>1</sup> Besta, Fabio, *Rel della R. Commissione per la pubbl. dei doc. finanziari della Rep. di Ven.*, pp. 4, 15, 46. Venezia, lit. Pellizzato, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Romanin, Vol. III, p. 347, n. 4. Even without taking into account certain records which carry the rent-roll (*catasto*) back to 1171, we find a regular roll compiled in Venice in the fourteenth century, while in the city of Florence it was only in 1498 that the first regular roll was completed; the roll for the district of Florence dates from 1506 only. The roll in use in Lombardy at the time of Charles V was based on the consumption of salt and on the billeting of cavalry in the preceding century. At Milan the earliest roll dates from the eighteenth century. The roll of house numbers in Venice also dates from the fourteenth century, while at Florence nothing of the kind existed, and Villani bases his calculation of the population at 90,000 upon the consumption of bread.

<sup>3</sup> The *Cronaca Altinate* (V, 93) says: “Ursi vel Udursi fuerunt domantes ad alapas e cholaphis erant caedentes pro quo *angaridiis* nolentes esse faciendos.” *Angariae*, however, as Simonsfeld observes, are not to be taken as meaning dues only, but also more commonly as *corvée*.





(A)



(B)



11

A



(C)



11

A



(D)



1

A



(E)



2

A



(F)



(G)

A — PENNY of Lodovico I, The Pious (814-840). (Museo Civico.)  
 B — Grosso of Enrico Dandolo (1192-1215). (Museo Civico.)  
 C — Penny of Enrico II. D — Penny of Lotario I. E — Penny of Lodovico I with legend "Venecias Moneta." F — Venetian penny, unnamed, with legend "Xpe Salva Venecias." G — Lira of 16 soldi, of Antonio Grimani (1521-1523)





the *Visdomini*, while the *Camerlenghi di Comun* were charged with the custody of the public funds; their office was organised in 1250 when their residence was fixed at Rialto. In 1280 the *officiali al Cattaver* were created. Their duty was to see to the conservation and recovery of public property (*averi*), consisting of lands, marshes, waters, shores, and buildings which had formerly been under the office of the *Piovego*.<sup>1</sup> The occupiers of public domain were held to a royalty (*exenia*) and to a rent in kind—fish, game, crops—or else to personal service (*angariae*), such as transport by boat of persons and goods, cultivation of fields and vineyards, grazing for the Doge's cattle, or even to other services (*scufie*), such as mounting guard at the Palace, repairing roads, building bridges, and so on. Apart from the property of the State the chief sources of revenue<sup>2</sup> were contributions in cash, such as the *quintellum*,<sup>3</sup> or in kind, such as foodstuffs<sup>4</sup> and merchandise, or in customs, or in various dues under the

<sup>1</sup> Piovego=pubblico.

<sup>2</sup> In the reign of the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo the revenue of the State from the city of Venice alone amounted to 611,600 ducats. Sanudo, *Vite dei Duchi* (*Rer. Ital. Script.*, Vol. XXII, p. 963).

<sup>3</sup> We find mention of the *quintello*, a tribute due to the State, in a deed by which Pietro Candiano III cedes to Domenico Zancani salt-pans in the lagoon of Murano. The document says, "Et si venumdaveris ipsas sallinas *quintellum* sit saluum in nostro Palatio. Verumtamen placuit nobis, ut si ipsas sallinas ad venumdandum veneritis, et de tua prole non fuerit, qui eas comparare non possit, non debeatis eas in extranea persona venumdare nisi in nostro Palatio. Si noster Palatius tantum pretium dare noluerit illud in tempore sicut ipsas sallinas apreciadas fuerint, quod si noster Palatius trahere noluerit, tunc potestatem habeatis ipsas sallinas venumdare cui volueritis salvo quintello, et censo de nostro palatio." Cornelius, II., *Ecclesiae Torcellanae*, Vol. II, p. 89. Venetiis, 1749.

<sup>4</sup> Among the tributes due to the Doge were the wild duck *oselle* (*anas boscas*). In 1521 the due was commuted into a gold or silver coin, which took its name of *osella* from its origin. Cfr. Marin Leonardo, *Illustrat. delle medaglie dei Dogi di Venezia denominate Oselle*. Venezia, 1847.

heads of *ancoraggio*, *ripatico*, *teloneo*, *transitura* (anchorage, wharfage, bond, and transit), in the duty on salt, whether imported or of home manufacture. If these sources proved insufficient for the growing needs of the State, the citizens were called upon to pay a tithe of their incomes. This provision, already in force in the tenth century, gave rise to the system of government loans. The Republic supplied its wants either by an appeal to patriotic sentiment, in the shape of voluntary advances to the State, or by enforced taxation of the rich.

The earliest certain example of a voluntary loan occurs in 1164, when on the appeal of the government a number of patricians responded by advancing 1500 silver marks, redeemable in eleven years on the security of certain schedules of the revenue from the market, which may, roughly speaking, be taken to represent the modern municipal revenue. Another voluntary loan, of 40,000 lire, was taken up by the citizens in 1187. The document which records this loan says it was issued for the war of Zara, and nothing more. But seeing that in the same year, and only six months later, the Republic was compelled by the cost of the war against the King of Hungary and of the siege of Zara to appeal once more to the liberality of its citizens for a voluntary loan, we may take it that the conditions of this later loan were identical with those of the earlier. And as a matter of fact Venetian patriotism responded to the appeal of the Doge Orio Mastropiero, and the loan of 16,105 Venetian lire was effected by the concession to the creditors, for twelve years, of the total income derived from the salt monopoly, from the mint, and from private dues towards the State.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Predelli, *Nota sui prestiti pubblici dei Veneziani* (Arch. Veneto, T. XXXVI, p. 74).

The establishment of forced loans, which constituted an almost inexhaustible source of funds to meet war expenses, dates back at least as far as 1171<sup>1</sup> and the war with the Emperor Emanuele Comnene. These forced loans, which eventually formed what we may call the funded debt, as opposed to the voluntary loans which constituted the floating debt of the Republic, seem to have taken various shapes. For example, in 1207 certain specified sources of revenue were assigned to the creditors as security for the capital which they had advanced at a high proportion of the entire estate with which they were credited in the valuation roll.<sup>2</sup> The names of the creditors and the sums advanced were entered at the Chamber of Loans (*Camera degli Impresidi*), and these credits were negotiable, devisable, and capable of being mortgaged. The *Visdomini* and *Camerlenghi*<sup>3</sup> were at first charged with the payment of the interest, or the extinction of the debt, where that was possible. Later, after 1262, this duty was discharged by the procurators of San Marco, into whose account a fixed sum out of the balance of each year's budget was paid for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> This rich source of funds for war purposes, partly owing to abuses in the reign of Francesco Foscari, partly owing to the abolition of the tithe in 1463, was subsequently exhausted. In 1482 a loan was raised bearing interest at five per cent

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the passage from the tithe to the forced loan took place through the *avetalicum*, an extraordinary tax, recorded in documents of 1152 and in the *Promissione al Maleficio* of the Doge Orio Mastropiero (1181). Besta, Enrico, *Il diritto e le leggi civ.*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> In 1353 the proportion of the forced loan reached thirty-eight per cent. (Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 683.) For the war of Chioggia (1381) a loan of 6,294,000 lire was raised.

<sup>3</sup> *Liber Plegiorum*, n. 153 and 317 in the *Regesti* for the years 1224 and 1225.

<sup>4</sup> See the resolution *de ligacione pecunie* of March 12, 1262.



and redeemable within a brief term of years by the application of special taxes. This loan constituted the New Funds (*Monte Nuovo*); the existing debt was consolidated and formed the Old Funds (*Monte Vecchio*).<sup>1</sup> The huge expenses of the war soon undermined the public credit and affected even the New Funds, so that recourse had to be had to fresh loans at ever higher rates. Thus in 1509 the Newest Funds (*Monte Nuovissimo*) was created and in 1525 the Subsidy Fund<sup>2</sup> (*Monte di Sussidio*); then followed the deposits in the Mint and the deposits outside the Mint (*Depositi in Zecca* and *fuori Zecca*), the interest on which was met by special taxation.

The names of these operations varied more than the nature of the operations themselves. The deposits were either perpetual (*ad haeredes*), or annuities for life, or redeemable at short periods by lot. We find suspensions of payment and enforced reductions of interest — not so oppressive as in other States, however; but we also find conversions<sup>3</sup> and bold operations for the extinction of debt. A notable instance was that of the extinction of the *Depositii* in Zecca about the close of the sixteenth century. The scheme was drawn up by Gian Francesco Priuli and was not revealed to the Senate which accepted it.<sup>4</sup>

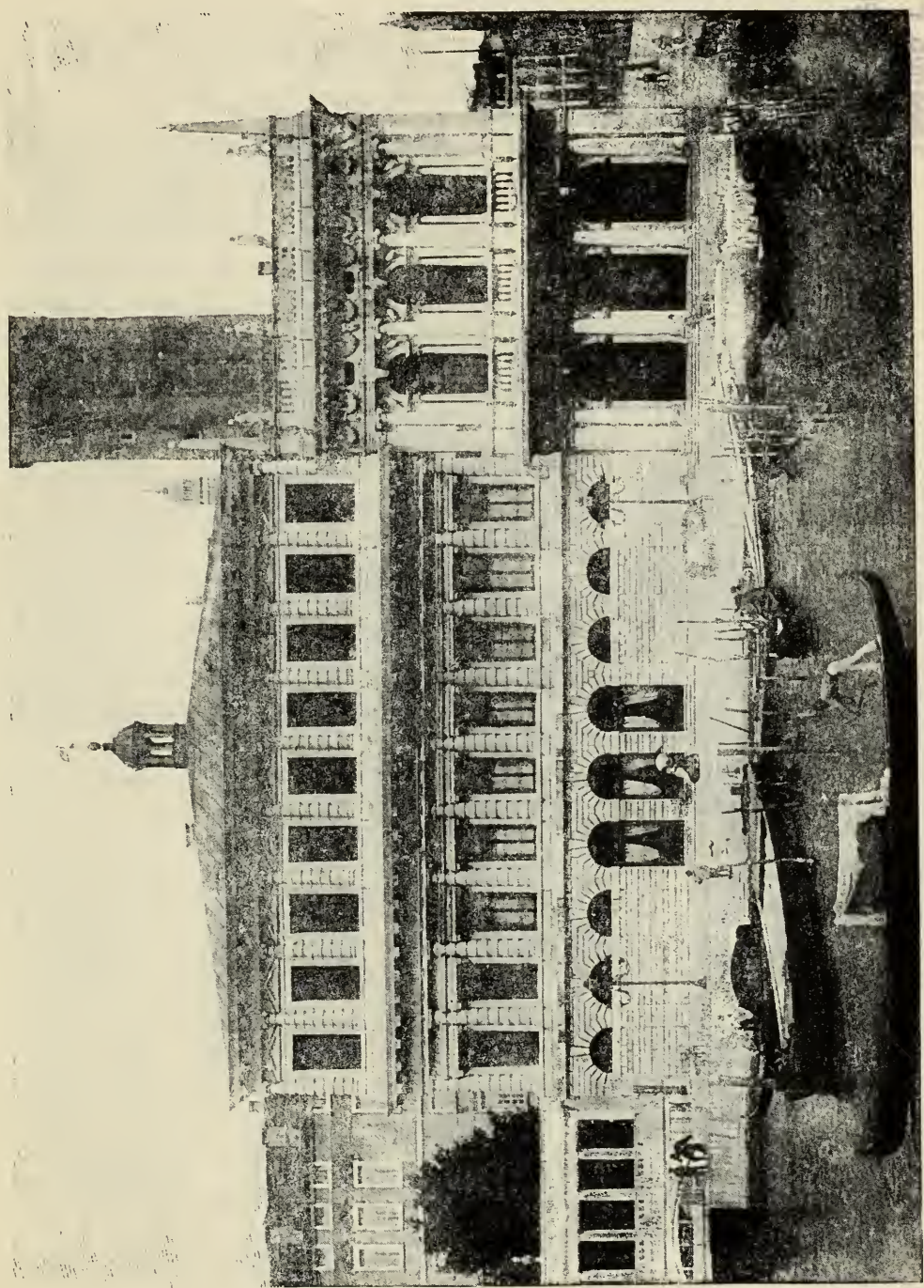
It is a common error, frequently repeated, that these various Funds (*Monti*) gave rise to the famous *Banco-giro* of Venice, which was not founded till 1619 on a sum of 600,000 ducats advanced to the Republic by

<sup>1</sup> Malipiero, *Annali Veneti* (Archivio Storico Italiano, VII, 1, p. 257, 1843).

<sup>2</sup> Predelli, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Castelnovo, *Intorno a due scritture finanziarie del secolo XVIII* (in the *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto*, 1902).

<sup>4</sup> Sandi, *Principi*, etc., *cit.*, Vol. II, Part II.



THE MINT BUILT BY JACOPO SANSOVINO (1536)





Giovanni Vendramin.<sup>1</sup> Nor can we believe that any public bank existed in Venice earlier than 1584, in which year the Bank of Rialto, or *della Piazza*, was opened. It continued down to 1637. Private bankers also are unknown earlier than the fourteenth century; before that date the term in use is always *campsores*, money-changers, who though they negotiated loans, still only kept a *tavola*, or money-changers' bench.<sup>2</sup> Deposits of money (*in deposito ad tabulas*), which is the essential feature of a bank, we find mentioned for the first time in a law of the Great Council passed on September 24, 1318, where it speaks of a *bancherius de scripta*, an expression which from this time onwards is used to indicate the genuine banker, the man who kept an account with his clients. It is precisely from this date onwards that we find the term *del banco* affixed to the names of patricians who had taken to the profession of banking. In 1361, probably as the result of serious bank failures, public opinion became favourable to the establishment of a State bank to supersede private bankers.<sup>3</sup> The idea was not accepted by the government, which confined itself to prescribing new safeguards and restrictions, as for example, the prohibition to fuse banking and merchant business, and remained firm to the principle of the freedom and plurality of banks. Notwithstanding losses and inconveniences the principle of full liberty in the banking business, a principle adopted for quite three centuries by the Republic, contributed not a little to perfect the theory of credit. And when Venice, at

<sup>1</sup> Soresina, *Il Banco-giro*, p. 8. Venezia, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrara, *Gli Antichi Banchi di Venezia* (*Nuova Antologia*, T. XVI, p. 177, Firenze, 1871, and *Arch. Veneto*, T. I, p. 54, Venezia, 1877).

<sup>3</sup> Lattes, *La libertà delle Banche in Venezia*, p. 13. Milano, 1869.



the beginning of her decline, had recourse to monopolies and to the concession of exclusive rights, there were those who still opposed the erection of a State bank. The speech of Tomaso Contarini, delivered in the Senate on December 28, 1584, in which he opposed a State bank and defended private banking, demonstrates to us that the Venetians were far advanced in the principles of economic science.<sup>1</sup>

The theory of credit and the use of bills, the invention of which is ascribed by some to the Florentines,<sup>2</sup> by others to the Genoese,<sup>3</sup> were in full exercise in Venice as early as the close of the thirteenth century. The State itself employed bills of exchange to supply money to its representatives abroad. The operation of protesting a bill was also of ancient use. An early example is to be found in 1358. In Avignon a bill for two thousand golden florins, drawn on March 1, 1358, by Paolo Paruta & Company, on Giovanni Spiafame & Company of Lucca, Bankers in Avignon, on sight at eight days, in favour of Napoleone Pontiroli, attorney (*Procuratore*) for the State of Venice at the Pontifical Court, and backed by Davino Jacobi, is protested by notarial act for failure of payment.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Lattes, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Rota, *Storia delle Banche*, p. 119. Milano, 1874. Errera, *Storia dell' Ec. politica nei sec. XVII e XVIII*, p. 54. Venezia, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Cibrario, *Ec. pol. del m. e.*, Vol. III.

<sup>3</sup> Ferrara, *Bibl. dell' Economista*, Vol. VI, *Introd.*

<sup>4</sup> Predelli, *Un protesto cambiario del Secolo XIV* (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XIV, p. 375). The form of the bill of exchange is interesting. "A lo nome de dio Amen. fata di sete di marzo MCCCLVIII, Giovanni e compagni, Paulo paruta e compagni. Salute di Venegia. Payerete per questa prima e per la segunda lettera, una fiata, a di VIII, vista la lettera, a ser Amadio notaro de la Corte Mazore, de Venegia, ouer a messer Napoleone de Puntiroli, o al qual di loro presentasse questa lettera, fiorini due milia d'oro al peso de la sentenza, li quali sono per cambio di ducati duo milia, che navemo receuuto, qui da li camerlengi del comune de

means of exchange and the rate of exchange were furnished by the Mint of Venice, famous throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

Some have maintained that from the days of Theodoric there existed a mint in the lagoons; they take their stand on a phrase in the famous letter of Cassiodorus. But Venice cannot have had her own mint earlier than the ninth century; for it is impossible to believe that a people still in the throes of misfortune and peril, not yet organised politically, and certainly not disposed to ignore all links, however nominal, which bound them to the Eastern empire, should have dreamed of coining their own money, which is an act of the very highest sovereignty. The inhabitants of the mainland who had sought shelter in the lagoons must certainly have brought with them the Roman coinage, just as later on they accepted the coinage of the Goths, the Greeks, the Lombards, and the Franks. But it is a rare thing to meet with coins at so early a date; the usual medium of exchange was foodstuffs, even in the purchase of land. When imperial coinage began to make its way in Venice, we find recorded *denari*, *mancosi* or *mancusi*, *lire d'oro* and *d'argento*, *bisanti* or *perperi*, and *soldi Veronesi*. The earliest deniers employed in Venice that have come down to us are the *denari Imperiali* of Louis the Pious (814-840) and of Lothair (840-855). They are of the weight and quality estab-

Venegia, zoe la metà auemo abuto contati e l'altra metà deuemo Auere adi primo aprile prosimo Faretene bono pagamento e Ponetelli a nostro Conto Lopagamento uol essere fiorini di firenze. Io dauino Jacobi sono contento de essere tenuto del souradito Cambio."

<sup>1</sup> Venice passed laws for the assay of gold. In a *Curiosa raccolta di segreti e pratiche superstiziose fatte da un popolano fiorentino del secolo XIV*, p. 25 (published by G. Giannini, Città di Castello, 1898), we read "Avemo da Vinegia che quelli affinatori di là tegniono della libra danari quarantasete e quarto d'oro fine," etc.

lished by Charlemagne, equal to the pennies of Pavia, Milan, Lucca, and Treviso, save that the word *Venecias*<sup>1</sup> takes the place of the names of those other cities. Some historians wish to see in this fact a proof that Venice was in actual and direct dependence on the empire, ignoring the fact that during the middle ages almost all Europe acknowledged the supremacy of the Germanic empire as the legitimate descendant of the Roman empire, and that the right to coin money was reserved exclusively for the emperor, even in the case of a country that was virtually independent. On the other hand, the coins of Louis and Lothair, certainly from an imperial mint, most probably Pavia, cannot prove a legitimate sovereignty over Venice. The name of Venice was placed on the coin very likely as an assertion of the imperial claims which Venice only recognised within certain purely formal limits.<sup>2</sup>

Venice, silently forging ahead, suddenly placed herself openly between the contending forces of East and West, almost as though to assert that she was herself a power that could no longer be neglected, and the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (810) is a proof that the growing race was beginning to acquire weight in the destinies of Europe.

Later on, when Venice blossomed into her wonderful life at Rialto, and proceeded to the consolidation and perfection of her political and civil constitution, beyond doubt she felt the need to coin her own money; and calling down the blessing of Heaven, as it were, upon her future, between the years 855 and 880,<sup>3</sup> she

<sup>1</sup> Papadopoli, N., *Le monete di Venezia*, p. 14. Venezia, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> San Quintino, *Osserv. crit. nell' orig. e antichità della moneta Veneta* (Memoirs of the R. Acc. di Scienze, Ser. II, T. X. Torino, 1847).

<sup>3</sup> Papadopoli, *op. cit.*, p. 23.



minted her earliest coin with the legend XPE SALVA VENECIAS. But seeing that the rights of the crown over the mint still existed, we find a few years later, in treaties with Rudolph of Burgundy, with Hugo of Provence, and with Berengar II, that permission is explicitly given to Venice to coin her own money; and she continues to issue coins which bear her name along with those of the emperors Conrad, Henry II, Henry III, and Henry IV.<sup>1</sup> These are the Venetian pennies (*monetae Venetiarum, nostrae monetae denariorum parvorum*) so frequently mentioned in ancient deeds. For example, there is the contract between Rozzone, Bishop of Treviso, and the Doge Pietro Orseolo which mentions Venetian money, “. . . annualiter persolvere debeatis vos D. Petrus dux infrascripto Episcopio Tarvinianensi, et mihi Rozoni Episcopo et successoribus meis, Bisantios aureos quatuor: et si ipsos quatuor Bisantios noluerimus tollere tunc pro ipsis Bisantiis dare debeatis de *vestris denariis* libras duas.”<sup>2</sup> The will of Pietro Orseolo II, in which he leaves to his people the sum of *mille ducentorum quinquaginta librarum*, speaks of *nostra moneta* and of *denari parvi*,<sup>3</sup> equal to half the *denari grossi* or *denari imperiali*, which were the pennies of Pavia, for the most part representing the two hundred and fortieth part of the imperial pound (*lira imperiale*), composed of twenty shillings (*soldi*) of twelve pennies (*denari*) each. In the deed of privileges, conceded by Lothair II to Pietro Polani (1136), we read: “Promisit cunctus ducatus Veneticorum nobis et successoribus nostris pro huius pactionis federe annualiter omni mense Marcio

<sup>1</sup> Papadopoli, op. cit., p. 23, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*, Vol. V, p. 507.

<sup>3</sup> Liruti in Argelati, *De Monetis Italiae*, Part II.



*persolvere libras suorum denariorum quinquaginta.*"<sup>1</sup> It is clear that the emperor is referring to Venetian money, as also in the passage in the renewal of privilege granted by Frederick I to Domenico Morosini (1154) "*. . . persolvere libras suorum denariorum L.*"<sup>2</sup>

Without taking into account the mythical *redonda aurea* of Pietro Badoer (998), the first Venetian coin without the name of a Carolingian emperor, and therefore without the evidence of sovereignty in this matter of minting, is the *maruccio* or half-penny of Vitale Michiel II (1156), which bears on the obverse the bust of San Marco and on the reverse a cross with points in the four cantons and round it the Christian name, surname, and title of the Doge. In the reign of Sebastian Ziani (1172-1178) the *denaro piccolo* was coined, and under Enrico Dandolo (1192-1205) the *grosso* or *matapane*, a coin of fine silver which enjoyed a very wide circulation all over Europe and whose name *grosso* has not yet disappeared from the speech of the people.<sup>3</sup>

As regards the coining of gold money, the priority belongs, it would seem, to Genoa.<sup>4</sup> Florence began to mint her golden florin in 1252, and Venice followed with her golden ducat, called later the *zecchnio*, in 1284. On the obverse is San Marco with a nimbus, holding in one hand the Gospel, and with the other presenting a banner with the cross upon it to the Doge, who kneels before him; on the reverse is the Redeemer on foot, with a nimbus in the form of a Greek cross

<sup>1</sup> Stumpf, *Acta Imperii*, p. 122. Innsbruck, 1865-1881.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The term is still in use among fishmongers, especially in the sale of sardines.

<sup>4</sup> Ambrosoli, *L'ambrosino d'oro*, p. 9. Milano, 1897.

inside an elliptical aureole studded with stars, the Gospel in one hand, while the other imparts the blessing. This, the finest and most highly valued coin of Venice, which was in circulation from the shores of the Mediterranean to China, was not called the *sequin* till 1543.<sup>1</sup> The name of "ducat" was then applied to the silver coin of 1561 minted by Girolamo Priuli.

It is an intricate and difficult task to determine with accuracy the value of money. At Venice, as elsewhere in Europe, the ideal if not the actual unit was the *lira*, always composed of 20 *soldi* and 12 *denari*; but its value was conventional and variable, and scholars have in vain endeavoured to determine the precise limits of what a *lira* represented from time to time.

The earliest coin of importance was the *grosso* or *malapane* of Enrico Dandolo (1193). Its weight was  $42\frac{1}{2}$  grains<sup>2</sup> and its value was 26 *piccoli*. Ten *grossi* made a *lira grossa*. The *quarterolo*, a coin contemporary with the *grosso*, represented the quarter of a *soldo*. In 1330 Francesco Dandolo coined the first *soldo effettivo*, known as a *cenoglelo* or *ginocchiello*, from the figure of the Doge kneeling. It was of silver, weighing 16 grains and represented from 16 to 18 *piccoli*. Dandolo and Foscari coined the *mezzanino* or half *grosso*, worth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *soldo*. The *grosso* was worth 3 *soldi* and weighed 22 grains of silver. The *soldino cenoglelo* was worth 9 *piccoli* and so was the *soldino mezzanino*. The *grossone* of Francesco Foscari weighed 61 grains and represented 8 *soldi*, as the value of the

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Zecca*, reg. 1, fol. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The grain, the lowest fraction of the *Marca Veneta*, corresponds to 52 milligrammes, 29 centesimi, a little less than the twentieth part of a gramme. Cfr. Padovan, *Le monete dei Veneziani*, p. 2. Venezia, 1887.

*grosso* had by that time reached four instead of three *soldi*. The half *bagattino* or *piccolo* of Michele Steno, a base coin corresponding to the twenty-fourth part of a *soldo*, was coined by several Doges. The *quat-trino* was worth a quarter of a *soldo*, the *bagattino* a twelfth; it was a copper coin that held its place from the reign of Pasquale Malipiero till the reign of Alvise Contarini. Niccolò Tron coined the first *lira effettiva* (1472); its weight was 126 grains with 120 grains of pure silver.

What we can be sure of is that the *lire* of Venetian currency were the *lira di piccoli* and the *lira di grossi*. During several centuries nothing was coined but the *denaro*, the two hundred and fortieth part of the *lira*. This *denaro*, with the steady debasing of the coinage, came eventually to be a bit of silver so minute that it gave rise to the phrase *alla lira*, and as the *denaro*, the penny, was designated *parvus*, *parvulus*, *piccolo*, and *minuto*, so the *lira* was called the *lira di piccoli* (*libra parvorum*). The *lira di piccoli* was always the most important coin of Venice and lasted from the tenth century to the fall of the Republic.<sup>1</sup> The *lira di grossi ordinari*, one-half larger than the *piccoli*, was used in exchanges of higher value. We have documents which give the *lira di grossi* as worth 10 golden ducats (1331), but this was probably the *lira di grossi d'imprestidi*, so called because it was employed in reckoning the funds; it was divided into 20 *soldi*, each *soldo* into 12 *grossi*, and each *grosso* into 32 *piccoli*. Then there was also the *lira di banco*, used in banking accounts, worth 10 ducats, or 62

<sup>1</sup> In course of time the *lira* was debased and so depreciated that while the *lira Veneta* at the close of the sixteenth century was worth 1.203 *lire italiane*, at the fall of the Republic it was worth only half a *lira italiana*; that is to say, of a value represented by 0.158 grain of gold.



*lire di piccoli*. The *librae auri* mentioned in ancient deeds were, as some think, a pound's weight of gold; others maintain that they were coins bearing this title. They say the same of the *redonda*, which no one has ever seen.<sup>1</sup> To us it seems probable that *librae auri* were *lire* whose *denari* were coins of gold.

Besides the *lira* the ducat was also used as a monetary unit. The ducat was first understood as the *ducato del grosso*<sup>2</sup>; later on it took the name of *zecchino*. Its original weight was 3,560 grammes, and it remained almost absolutely untouched in weight, form, and intrinsic value. The ducat represented 40 *soldi dei grossi* or 60 *dei piccoli* — “*ducatus aureus debeat currere in Venetiis et ejus districtu pro soldis XL ad grossos*” — so runs the order of the Great Council of June 2, 1285.<sup>3</sup> Finally the *ducato corrente*, realised in the coin of Girolamo Priuli (1561), became the ideal medium of exchange; it corresponded to 5 Venetian *lire*, 4 *soldi* — that is, to 124 *soldi*.

The documents show us great variety in the value of the medium of exchange. The penny of the Emperor Louis is the twelfth part of the *soldo* and had  $28\frac{2}{3}$  grains of pure metal. After about 378 years they coined the *grosso*, of  $42\frac{1}{2}$  grains, which was worth 24 of Louis' pennies, but with an addition of only half as much metal. Francesco Marchiori, master in the mint, declared it to be of 10 carats. On this, then, as on other points, our authorities are not in accord. The fault, no doubt, lies with the carelessness of the workmen and of the officials of the mint. An order of

<sup>1</sup> Padovan, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> “Monseignor Enrie Dandle” in 1193 struck “les medailles d'argent que d'ou apele Ducat.” Da Canale, *Chronique*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, M. C., *Luna*, p. 48.



November 11, 1457, calling attention to the fact that “le monede se fano cum pocha raxon e ordine che le una grandissima infamia” provides “che debiase observar quei muodi e ordeni à zustar, pexar, mendar e lauorar le monede, li qual son stadi trovadi eordenadi per li masseri de la cecha, azochè le monede se fazza zuste, bone et equal.”<sup>1</sup> It would seem, however, that but little attention was paid to “zustar” or “pexar” the coin; for in the Museo Civico in Venice and in the Bottacin Museum at Padua we have 22 specimens of *grossi* dating from different reigns, all of them fresh from the mint, but by no means of equal weight.<sup>2</sup>

Much more serious steps were taken, however, to suppress coining or clipping, both of them common offences. In 1229 the Doge Jacopo Tiepolo threatens the loss of a hand, and in 1249 fines and punishments were again proclaimed, apparently to little purpose. In 1321 provision was made for an inspection of the money-changers’ benches to prevent them from circulating coin that was either false, clipped, filed, sweated, or otherwise debased. In 1357 and 1359 the law threatened to blind and deprive of their right hand the men and to cut the noses of the women found guilty of coining.<sup>3</sup>

In the feverish race for wealth money acquired a mysterious and vicious attraction, and recourse was had to the secrets of alchemy for the falsification of coin. The vital points in history spring to light in the details, and it is worth while to pause for a moment over a curious case which introduces us to a chamber furnished with retorts and furnaces, round which the

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, Senato, *Misti*, reg. 52, fol. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Padovan, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Papadopoli, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

coiners, in a paroxysm of greed and fear, are busy at their work. In 1499, in the house of a certain Francesco de Usnagi, a clandestine mint was discovered, and in the course of the trial, a girl of fifteen, Cassandra Rado, daughter of Francesco's mistress, made this deposition, which gives us a vivid picture of the workshop and the men. "In quella caxa," she says, "el iera tuto pien de fornaxe, boze et cosse de Archimia: tuta la nocte esso (Francesco) non feua altro che lauorar de archimia: i tolleua stagni, rami e dauage imbianchimento; et de quella archimia uedeua che el dicto Francesco batteua marcelli<sup>1</sup> Venitiani." Usnagi had made moulds "de crea, de oio, ed de cimadura, et li affinava al Sol; poi el meteua un ferro desoto sul qual iera intaiado la forma del marcello et meteua suxo questa archimia et poi meteua un altro ferro; et dicto et facto el marcello iera belle facto."<sup>2</sup> The heavy penalties attached to coining show how anxious Venice was to preserve the prestige of her mint, while the care she bestowed upon it was calculated to serve both her practical interests and its fair name. The mint originally stood at San Bartolomeo; then, in 1277, it was transferred to San Marco, probably to the site occupied by Sansovino's building of the sixteenth century. At first the Great Council alone had charge of the mint; later the Doge, his council, the three chiefs of the Quarantia, the Council of Ten, and the procurators of the State shared in the direction. In the sixteenth century the Senate assumed the duty.<sup>3</sup> The mint always had its own officials, the *Massari*,

<sup>1</sup> A coin struck under the Doge Nicolò Marcello (1473-74).

<sup>2</sup> Padovan, *op. cit.*, p. 25, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Padovan, *Dei magistrati che ebbero ingerenza nella Zecca Ven.* (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XIV, pp. 8, 10.)

otherwise known as the *Estimatori*, the *Ufficiali all'oro e all'argento* or *alle monete*, recorded as early as 1224, the *Conservatore*, the *Provveditori*, the *Ufficiali alla foglia d'oro*, the *Revisori*, the *Inquisitori*, the *Deputati od aggiunti alla provvision del denaro*,<sup>1</sup> etc. For the working and handling of the precious metals there were minor officers such as the weighing clerks, the assayers, the minters, and the fusers of gold and silver.

At the opening of the fifteenth century the Venetian mint used to coin 1,000,000 ducats of gold, 200,000 silver coins, and 800,000 silver *soldi*, and Venetian money, like Florentine, was in circulation throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> The Venetians were justified in considering themselves masters of the gold currency throughout Christendom, a title given them by the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo in that striking deathbed speech of his (1423) wherein he summed up the commerce, the naval power, and the industrial resources and riches of his fellow countrymen.

<sup>1</sup> Padovan, *Dei magistrati che ebbero ingerenza nella Zecca Ven.* (Arch. Veneto, T. XIV, pp. 8, 10), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> The Venetian mint coined *torneseli* and other foreign moneys and ingots of silver styled sterling (*esterlings*) for the Hanseatic towns and for England. The *Maggior Consiglio* on October 9, 1274, passed the following order: "Quod addatur in capitulari masseriorum de moneta grossa quod sicut reddebant argentum de *sterlin* projectum in virgo mercantoribus pro solidis quinque, sic teneatur reddere pro solidis quinque," etc. Cfr. Romanini, Vol. II, p. 383, n. 4.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NOBLES AND CITIZENS — THE PEOPLE AND THE CRAFT-GUILDS — THE JEWS

**D**EMOCRACY favours the development of great families, who feed the fickle fancy of the mob in order to exploit it later on for their own ambitious ends. So it happened in Venice, where the action of the populace, which had been the prime factor in the early growth of the Republic, failed to curb the growing power of some few families who gradually organised themselves as a caste, pushed onward step by step, and acquired supremacy in the midst of internal discords. This process indicated a determined harking back to the origins of the race, and therefore those few families which came to the front sought to increase their nobility and to flatter their pride by ascribing to themselves Roman or royal descents, claims that were natural enough but quite incapable of demonstration. It is quite certain that the great families of the mainland, when they took refuge in the lagoons, either brought with them much of their family property or still retained their mainland possessions, and from the very first this must have given them the prestige of wealth and birth among the lagoon population even before they acquired it by their service to their new home.

Accordingly, even as early as the tenth century, we find persons who subscribed themselves as “*nobilis*,”



and in the very infancy of the Venetian constitution there arose a kind of upper class composed of the noble and the rich. Birth coupled with wealth has always exercised a powerful influence on the masses, and this combination occurred among the Venetians, who alone among the peoples of Western Europe had preserved their surnames even through the dark ages. Thanks to this fact we are able to follow, even though but dimly, the history of certain prominent families who were flourishing in Venice long before even the royal houses of Europe had established their family names.

As we have already seen, some of these leading families, the nucleus of an aristocracy, sided with the Greeks; others leaned towards the rulers of the Italian mainland. The vigorous rivalry of these factions, which finds an echo in the struggles between the patriarchs of Aquileia and of Grado, agitated the lagoon islands during the earlier centuries and held the State in continual fluctuation. Thus the policy of the Doge Obelerio, who in 804 sided actively with the Franks, brought about the events which led to the concentration at Rialto. The quarrels of the Candiani and the Orseoli now blazed up and now died down, but kept Venice in unrest for many years. The Candiani, whose name was afterwards changed to Sanudo, were a powerful family with vast possessions in Italy. Tradition says that one of the earliest tribunes or consuls sent from Padua to Venice was a Candiano. Even after they had acquired many houses, gardens, and fisheries in the lagoon they still retained their mainland possessions, and were therefore bound to side with the rulers of the mainland. The Partecipazî and Orseoli, on the contrary, belonged to the Byzantine faction. The Orseoli, if not actually

a branch of the Partecipazi, as Fontanini held, were certainly bound to them by blood and common interests. These great families had each a large number of relations, friends, supporters, and dependants, all of whom contributed to render the struggle both longer and more serious.

When the Doge Pietro Candiano IV (959) began to ignore the obligations of his office, pursuing his own ambitious aims, neglecting his duty to the constitution, and acting like a despot, the people rose, set fire to the palace, and in the atrium of San Marco slew the Doge and his young son, who were attempting flight. The son of Pietro, Vitale, patriarch of Grado, took refuge in Saxony, and called on the emperor, Otho II, for vengeance, while the widowed Valdrada of Tuscany, supported by the Candiani faction, betook herself to Pavia, where she urged the Empress Adelaide, mother of Otho, to declare war on Venice.

Meantime the opposite party came to the fore and elected Pietro Orseolo Doge (976). He succeeded for a while in appeasing the angry menaces of the defeated faction; but they soon broke out once more. The Doge's life itself was threatened by the Candiani, and in all probability he would have ended his days miserably had he not secretly left the country and retired to the rocky solitude of Cossano in Aquitaine. On the flight of Orseolo the Candiani recovered power and elected Doge Vitale, brother of the murdered Pietro; but he too ended his life in the monastery of Sant' Ilario. Party feuds made peace impossible, and the history of the leading families presents us with alternations of splendour and power, of violent death, of the sullen sadness of exile or of the cloister. In the midst of these bloody rebellions Venice gave birth to

the flower of legend. We have the loves of Elena Candiano and Gerardo Guoro which Bandello took as the subject of a novel, a tale that bears a close resemblance to the love story of Romeo and Juliet. Elena and Gerardo, hopelessly in love with each other, are secretly married by the help of an old nurse; but while Gerardo is away in the East, the father of Elena proposes to wed her to the patrician Vittore Belegno. Elena goes off into a swoon, through her agony and her fear, and being held for dead, is buried in the church of San Pietro di Castello. But on the very day of her funeral Gerardo comes home, and learning the sad event, and out of his mind, he rushes to the church and tears off the cover of the tomb and abandons himself in a paroxysm of tears on the body of his wife. The kisses and tears of Gerardo recall Elena to life, and unlike the story of the lovers of Verona, the loves of the two Venetians end happily with the pardon and blessing of the old Candiano. The tale has no foundation in fact, but it doubtless has its roots in antiquity and represents the simple childlike temper of those times, when boldness and courage were not divorced from delicacy of feeling.

Were chronicles not so brief and condensed, and could we sift legend from fact, what a flood of light would be thrown on the private history of the great families which formed the aristocracy of Venice, by the quarrels of the Morosini and Caloprini which rent the reign of Tribuno Menio. The Caloprini laid a plot to murder all the Morosini. They were warned in time and found safety in flight, all except Domenico Morosini, who fell, stabbed by Stefano Caloprini, in the piazza of San Pietro di Castello as he was coming out of the church. The wounded man was carried by his



servants to the convent of San Zacaria, where he expired amid tears and vows of vengeance by the Morosini who had taken asylum in the cloister.<sup>1</sup> Blood called for blood. The Caloprini and the Candiani headed the Franco-German faction, which, perhaps, aimed at the establishment of a despotism under German protection. The Morosini and the Orseoli were the champions of national rights and desired to maintain with the Eastern empire relations not of subjection, but of common interests and mutual aid. But if we examine them closely we shall discover that these rivalries concealed not so much political aspirations for the race as the personal ambitions of the great families ; for we find the Orseoli themselves, later on, drawing towards Germany and seeking to change the dukedom into an absolute monarchy. All their efforts were directed to this end. The policy of the Orseoli, who contracted marriages with the kings of Servia and Hungary and sought wives for their sons at the haughty Byzantine court, reveals the intention of making the ducal authority hereditary in their family and of substituting the power of birth and wealth for democratic equality. The hereditary idea is clearly manifested in the policy of many Doges, who raised their sons to the position of Doge-Consort. Add to this that the Venetian bishoprics were a constant object of desire to the great houses, who sought the sees for their younger sons, and thus, in a way, rendered the ecclesiastical subject to the temporal power. Thus the Orseoli and other Doges concentrated both powers in their own hands by keeping down the revenues of the see of Grado, the ecclesiastical centre of the Venetian community, a policy which rendered that

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Diacono and Andrea Dandolo.

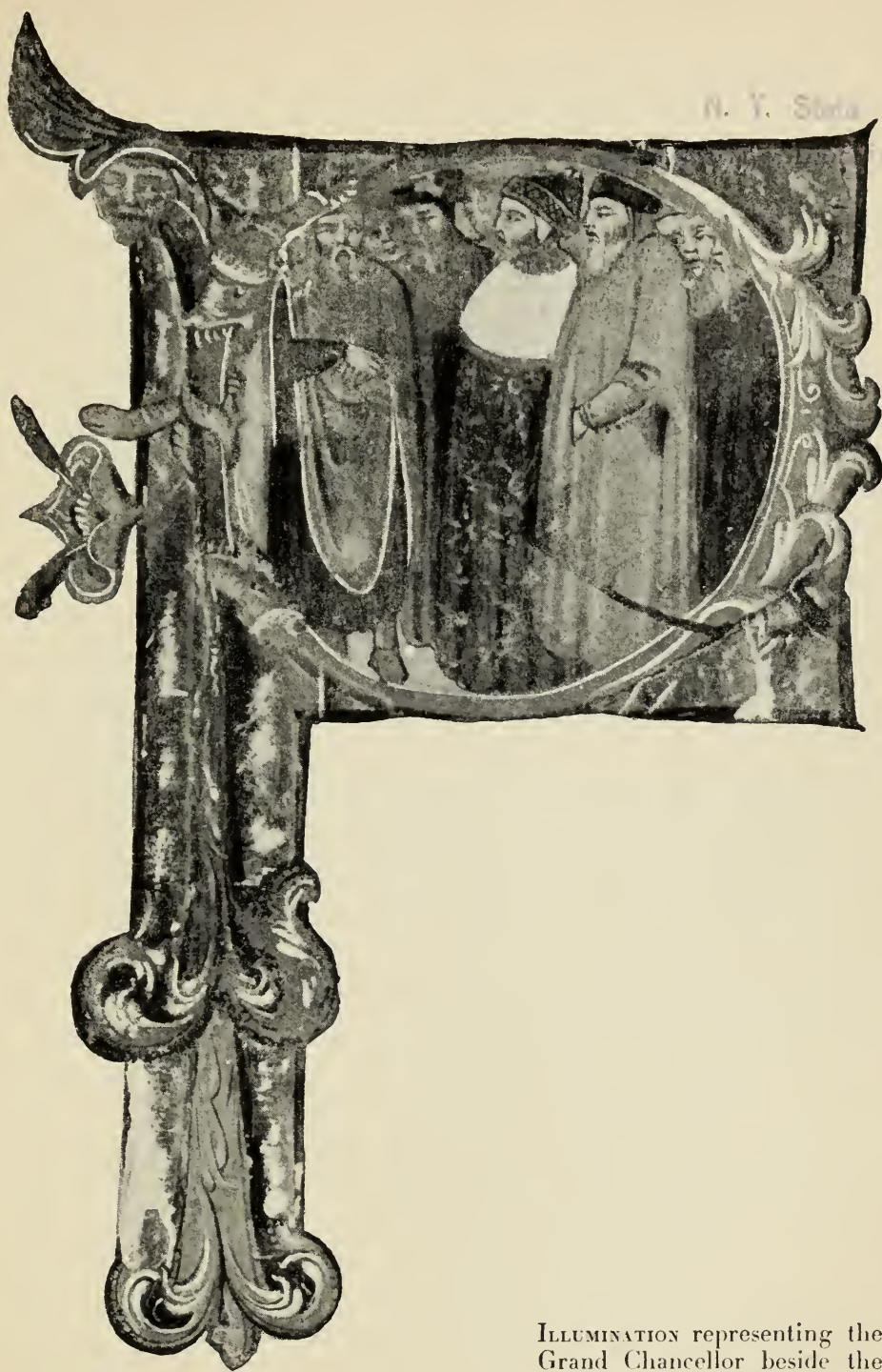


see impossible save for the rich, that is to say, for sons, brothers, or cousins of the Doge. Gregory VII, however, by augmenting the revenues of the see, withdrew it from the protection of the Doges and secured authority and independence for the clergy.<sup>1</sup>

To assist them in their aim of establishing an hereditary sovereignty the great families did not hesitate to make use of the people by playing on their passions. A proof of this we find in the quarrels of the Tiepolo, the aristocratic faction, and of the Dandolo, relying on the mob, though both were really merely seeking to concentrate power in their own hands. These illegitimate aims and violent oppositions, this struggle for power among the diverse elements in the State, tormented the early years of Venetian freedom with deeds of blood, and Machiavelli was right when he declared that no mediæval State of Italy was more torn by faction than Venice. But her real glory was that she, earlier and better than any other State, succeeded in restoring peace. At Venice the feuds were between the great families rather than between the rich and the poor. After their first futile attempts at rebellion, the people of Venice would, perhaps, have welcomed a despot; but destiny saved them from subjection to a tyrant. The supreme idea of liberty had greater power than the fierceness of party faction, and the quarrels of the leading families paved the way for the reforms of Gradenigo.

When the people were once excluded from all share in the government, the aristocracy set itself to imposing upon itself a rigid discipline designed to preserve order, power, and authority. For example, in the interests of orderly debate, it was determined that no noble might

<sup>1</sup> Gfrörer, XXXVI.



ILLUMINATION representing the  
Grand Chancellor beside the  
Doge Andrea Dandolo



enter the Great Council till he had reached twenty-five<sup>1</sup> years of age, nor the Senate till he was thirty. Noble ecclesiastics were excluded from the *Maggior Consiglio* with a view to checking the dangerous interference of Church interests in the management of the State; the dignity of the patriciate was maintained by requiring legitimacy of birth and nobility of marriages. Once acquired, the privileges of the caste were surrounded with safeguards; for they were not allowed to shelter crime, nor to serve as a cloak for evil deeds. Expulsion from the order was the punishment meted to the man who had brought shame upon it. Such was the case of Antonio Ariani, expelled with the whole family for fraudulent debts. He vented his spite by declaring in his will that no son or daughter of his should ever marry a noble on pain of forfeiting all rights in his legacies.<sup>2</sup>

Side by side with the patriciate another more modest, but perhaps not less illustrious, order of citizens came into being. They were known as *cittadini*, and represented the upper strata of the people, which had succeeded in emerging — thanks to an intelligent and versatile activity which studied everything, applied all knowledge, and took a thousand forms. Venetian citizenship was either of right or of grace. The citizens

<sup>1</sup> At the close of the fifteenth century admission to the Great Council was granted by ballot. On December 4, Santa Barbara's day, the young nobles who had not yet reached the legitimate age for entering the Council drew from an urn a ball; among the balls were thirty gilded ones. Whoever drew a gilt ball entered the Great Council.

<sup>2</sup> Ariani, in his will of July 1, 1361, says: "Item non voglio che alcuno de miei fioli puossa tuor alcuna zentildonna Venetiana per mugier, e chi contrafarà non abbia niente del mio, e che mie fie non possano maritarsi in alcun zentilhomo per modo alcuno, e contrafacendo non abbia niente del mio." Gradenigo, Pietro, *Memorie di casi singolari* (Marciana, Cl. VII, Ital. Cod. 481).



of right were known as *cittadini originarii*; the order included all who had been born in wedlock of parents whose parents had also belonged to the order and had never plied a mechanical craft. Citizens of grace were those who, in recompense for services rendered, were admitted to the order. All citizens were known either as *de intus* or *de extra* or both. The citizen *de intus* had the right to hold certain offices in the city and was free to carry on any trade even among the more important; the citizen *de extra* had the right to sail under the protection of San Marco and to trade in Venetian markets with the advantages of Venetian privileges.

The *cittadini originarii* were not, even after the closing of the Great Council, entirely excluded from the government. A field was left open to their genius and their industry, but of course under the direction of the aristocratic constitution. The free State of Venice, whose constitution showed such splendid examples of political equilibrium, did not close itself at once into a hard and fast privileged caste. As time went on, the *cittadini*, the gentry of the people, as Pier Maria Contarini called them, became a sort of second grade of nobility, corresponding to the equestrian order in Rome, and known in later times as the order of the Secretaries, equal in rank with the nobility of the mainland. With a view to winning over the order of *cittadini* which by education and trade had raised itself to considerable power and had an extensive clientele among the people, the *Maggior Consiglio*, in 1268,<sup>1</sup> instituted the office of grand chancellor, and declared that the right to hold this office belonged exclusively to the order of *cittadini*, which thus was prudently made to form a connecting link between the patriciate and the

<sup>1</sup> The first grand chancellor was Corrado Ducato.

people. The aristocracy wisely excluded itself from any right to hold the office of grand chancellor, — an office among the very highest in the Republic, for it lasted for life and attached to it were special prerogatives and privileges, — and therefore the choice fell upon a member of the order of *cittadini*, who thus had the satisfaction of feeling that they were properly represented in the government of the State. The grand chancellor was head of the Ducal Chancery, had precedence of all secretaries of whatever Council, was admitted to every Council of State, had the right to be present at all State functions, took precedence even of Senators, and ranked only second to the procurators of San Marco and the Doge's *Consiglieri*. He wore purple, received a fixed and ample income, and on his election had the right to a solemn public entry on his office; on his death his obsequies were identical with those of a Doge. He bore the style and title of Chevalier of the Golden Stole, and enjoyed all the prerogatives of nobility save the right of voting. The citizen-chancellor exalted and honoured in his own person the class from which he sprang; while the aristocracy, maintaining all its essential privileges, found in the order of the *cittadini*, so highly favoured, not so much a pliant tool as a powerful support for its policy.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, the *cittadini* had not only the right to aspire to all posts in the Ducal Chancery, and they were sometimes posts of the highest confidence, but also to the upper ranks in the army; and they were usually chosen to represent the Republic diplomatically at many of the minor courts with the title of Minister (*Residente*). We will close with Contarini's remark, "To all this we must add a number of posts

<sup>1</sup> Ferro, *Diz. del diritto comune e Veneto*, T. III. Venezia, 1779.

of honour and profit reserved for the *cittadini*, such as the Grand Chancellor of Crete, the Constable of Crema, and others from which the nobility is excluded, and to crown all, captain of a galley in time of war.”<sup>1</sup>

All those who settled in Venice permanently sought the title of *cittadino*, which was granted as a privilege<sup>2</sup> to those who had resided uninterruptedly for twenty-five years. Children of foreigners born in Rialto who had resided for ten years consecutively had the right to claim the citizenship *de intus*, and if they continued their residence for another six years consecutively they had the right to the citizenship *de extra*.<sup>3</sup> The citizenship was also conceded to those who settled in Venice with their families for two years, provided they paid the public burdens (*fazioni*).<sup>4</sup> Towards the close of the

<sup>1</sup> Contarini, *Compendio universale di repubblica*, p. 80. Venetia, 1602.

<sup>2</sup> *Privilegio* was the title of the diploma which granted citizenship. *Privilegi*, both *de intus* and *de extra*, were occasionally granted conveying the right to all prerogatives of the Venetian nobility; this implied a seat in the *Maggior Consiglio*. But such privileges were rare and were usually reserved for crowned heads.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Maggior Consiglio*, *Magnus*, fol. 95, t. 3, September 4, 1305. “Quod omnes qui steterunt firmi habitatores Veneciis a XXV anni hactenus et fecerunt et facient factiones comunis Veneciarum debeant esse Veneti habitando Veneciis vel in terris subjectis dominio Veneciarum . . . ;” and on the same page of the same date, “Item quod illi qui steterunt vel stabunt de cetero Veneciis XV annis et fecissent et facient factiones comunis secundum quod dictum est superius possint mercari Veneciis sicut possunt alii Veneti; et quando erunt ad terminum annorum XXV ut captum fuit sint Veneti sicut alii habitando Veneciis vel in terris subjectis dominio Veneciarum.”

<sup>4</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Novella*, fol. 6, August 29, 1350. “Cum pars capta in Rogatis die XI Augusti 1348 de hiis qui venientes infra tempus duorum annorum habitatum Veneciis cum uxore vel familia sua acquirebant civilitatem nostram de intus expiraverit. Et . . . extimetur quod confirmatio ipsius spectat ad honorem et bonum nostrum. Vadit pars . . . quod quicumque de cetero cum sua uxore vel alia familia si uxorem non habuerit infra tempus duorum annorum proxime venerit Venecias ad standum et habitandum continue in Veneciis, cum predicta uxore vel sua familia



fourteenth century the citizenship *de intus* was thrown open to all who came to reside in Venice with their families, provided they applied to the *Provveditori di Comune*.<sup>1</sup> This produced such a demand for privileges that it was found necessary to take steps to meet the case, and a law was passed that all such privileges required a vote of two-thirds of the Great Council (1403). Later on an office was established to correct abuses.<sup>2</sup>

Such provisions as these brought strength and prosperity to the city, even as early as the opening of the trecento. There was a continual inflow of fresh elements, full of vigour, which took a thousand shapes and produced admirable results. The many privileges conceded by the *Provveditori di Comune* to those artificers who had acquired the right to citizenship by sojourn, whether of fifteen or twenty-five years, and had paid the public taxes, give us an idea of the various elements which went to make up Venetian society. We find natives of all parts of Italy, and of the most various trades, from the simplest to the most highly skilled. Between 1305 and 1310 we get a rag-merchant from

et supportando onera et factiones comunis sicut alii cives nostri, habeatur et sit civis noster et Venetus de intus sicut sunt ceteri de XV annis. Ita quod si habitando continue per decem annos continuos steterit et habitaverit Veneciis cum uxore vel familia sua ipso facto intelligatur esse ad conditionem eorum qui habitant XXV annis et ita possit petere et acquirere privilegium civilitatis nostre intus et extra sicut possunt illi qui probant habitationem annorum XXV. Et si quis feret artifex sive faciens misterium vel exercitium qui venerit infra dictum tempus duorum annorum cum uxore vel familia sua ad standum . . . et supportandum onera . . . possint de presenti navigare."

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, M. C., *Leona*, fol. 47, May 7, 1391. "Quod omnes forenses qui undecumque venerint habitatum Veneciis cum suis familiis a modo usque unum annum proximum presentando et faciendo se scribi ad officium provvisorum comunis sicut in similibus fieri consuevit, sint statim cives de intus et pro civibus de intus habeantur et tractentur."

<sup>2</sup> Ferro, *op. cit.*



Cremona, living in the Quirini houses at San Giuliano ; a Daniel Veriselli, from Verona ; a Giberto, strapmaker, from Padua ; Natale, a leather merchant, from Isola ; Egidio ; Cavomaïor, oil merchant, from Feltre ; Philip, glover, from Pisa ; Master Pietro, notary of the Consoli in Padua ; Giovanni of Verona, jerkin-maker ; Jacopino da Riva, coppersmith in Rialto ; Guglielmo Marchesi, goldsmith at San Lio ; Morone, from Mantua ; the Buoni, civil-engineers ; several fustian merchants from Cremona ; Master Giovanni, physician, from Piacenza ; Master Roberto, physician, from Bologna ; Master Rabacino of Florence, reader in grammar ; Jacopino of Bologna, notary to the *Cinque alla Pace* ; Ser Ventura, a Florentine ; Cirondo, from Lucca ; Codalesne, copper-smith, from Ferrara ; Master Mino, painter of Siena ; Bonaccorso, from Milan ; Flordenimo, from Fabriano, and so on. And even thus early not only Italians, but also foreigners, received Venetian citizenship ; for example, Federigo, the cutler, from Passau, another Philip, also from Passau, and Conrad, a German dyer.<sup>1</sup>

Thus fresh blood flowed in to renew and invigorate the community. The Republic also, on rare occasions, granted by diploma, or golden bull,<sup>2</sup> the privilege of citizenship *de intus et de extra* with the enjoyment of all rights appertaining to the nobility, to persons who had deserved well of the State or who were remarkable for their ability ; for example, in 1312, to a certain Master Ravagnin, physician of Belluno, as a recognition

<sup>1</sup> *Commemoriali Reg.*, T. I and II, Lib. I and III. Venezia, 1876, 1878.

<sup>2</sup> The ducal seal or *bulla* attached to the diploma did not change the import of the deed by change in the metal. Bulls of gold, silver, or lead were used in accordance with the rank of the person on whom the privilege was conferred. Vitale Michiel's diploma to the commune of Arbe (June 28, 1166) has a leaden seal, on which was the figure of the Doge kneeling before San Marco.

of his skill in his profession (*suae artis eminentia*). From the days when Venice began to rule the seas and to claim the respect and admiration of Europe for her political constitution, the privilege of citizenship was eagerly sought by foreigners not merely as an honour but also on account of its utility. The conditions of navigation were at that time wretched, but under the banner of San Marco every one journeyed safely. Even foreign princes and the most illustrious personages of foreign countries sought Venetian citizenship to safeguard their trade and to command, when necessary, the protection of Venice. For example, such a privilege was granted to the Scrovegni of Padua in 1301, to Azzone Marquis of Este and Ancona (1304), to Rambaldo of Collalto (1306), to the Lords of Camino, to Dalmasio de Banolis, captain-general of the Holy See in Ferrara (1312), to Maladino, Ban of Croatia and Bosnia (1314), to the Lords of Carrara (1318), to Lodovico Gonzaga, Lord of Mantua, to Azzone Visconti, vicar-general of Milan (1332), to Ostasio da Polenta (1336), to the Malaspinas (1339), to Enrico, Patriarch of Aquileia, and to Galeazzo, Count of Montefeltro (1343), to the Duke of Athens and the counts of Sanseverino (1334), to Humbert II, Dauphine of Vienna (1345), to Oberto Pallavicino (1348), to Stephen, the Greek emperor (1350), to Federico Savorgnano and Antonio della Scala, Lord of Verona (1385),<sup>1</sup> to Jacopo

<sup>1</sup> Here is the text of the diploma which created Antonio della Scala a citizen of Venice and a member of the Great Council. "1385 die XVIII Junii — Capta. Cum magnificus et potens dominus Anthonius de la Scala dominus Verone collegatus noster habeat singularem et sincerissimum affectum perseverandi semper in perfecta amicitia cum nostro dominio et ad roborandum et demonstrandum suam optimam dispositionem ad honorem et statum nostrum optet fieri civis noster et de nostro maiori consilio quod mente et corpore sit unitus cum nostro dominio, vadit pars quod in

dal Verme (1388), to Francesco di Carrara (1392), and so on. At other times the citizenship was conferred on a whole class of people collectively as a reward for deserts. An example is found in the golden bull of the Doge Michele Steno (1400), granting the Venetian citizenship to the nobles and citizens of Zara.<sup>1</sup>

Venice enjoyed the proud privilege of feeling herself superior to other nations and of conferring on her citizens, as did ancient Rome, both authority and respect by the weight of her mere name.

By such wise dispositions the Republic maintained her position firm, and if the people found itself removed from the administration of affairs, still we are not to suppose that all paths to public honours were closed to it. In times of need, when the treasury was exhausted by wars, the patriciate was put up to sale and the Venetian nobles received in their midst some of the

bona gratia assumatur et fiat civis noster et de nostro maiori consilio cum filiis et heredibus suis." (Arch. di Stato, Maggior Consiglio, *Deliberazioni*, *Leona*, 1384-1415, fol. 5.)

<sup>1</sup> The document was edited by Ljubic (*Mon. spectantia hist. Slavorum merid.*, Vol. IX, p. 11. Zagabriae, 1878) and republished by Lazzarini (*Nuovo Arch. Veneto*, T. XIV, p. 368) with some variants. Lazzarini describes the *Bolla*, which is in the Museo Bottacin at Padua. It is in the form of a cylindrical box and is attached to the parchment. It is of gold-leaf covering some other material, probably wax. It has a diameter of forty-six millimetres and a thickness of about nine. On the right side of the obverse is San Marco, standing up before his throne; he is dressed in a dalmatic and stole studded with crosses, his mitre on his head, surrounded with an aureole. His right hand grasps the staff of his banner, which rises in the middle of the medal, his left holds the open Gospel. Round the saint runs the legend S. MARCVS. On the left of the obverse is the Doge standing up, clean shaven, dressed in Byzantine robes, with tunic and mantle sown with pearls; the ducal bonnet on his head. His right hand grasps a banner, his left the scroll of his *promissione*. The legend over the Doge runs MICHAEL. STENO. DVX. The whole of the reverse is occupied with the legend MICHAEL-STENO DEI-GRATIA DVX VENETIA ET. C.



GOLD SEAL of the Doge Michele Steno (1400-1404). (Bottacin Museum at Padua)



NOTARY

CARPENTER

SMITH

(Cronologia Magna)





plebeian families who by honest labour had amassed riches. How eagerly the title of patrician was sought for we may gather from the story of Ser Lunardo dell' Agnella, corn merchant, of the parish of the Mater Domini, who died of a broken heart when he found himself still excluded from the Great Council in spite of having offered himself, an attendant, and pay for one hundred and fifty men for one month during the war of Chioggia.

If the Venetian constitution enforced the power of the nobility, it also protected and guaranteed the people from every injury; and so after the early and transitory agitations, we find patricians and people mutually supporting each other and coöperating for the common weal. While the aristocracy discharged its political duties with that equity which unites divergences and corrects inequalities, the people, in the large liberty of industrial life, applied its practical intelligence and developed its powers in the craft-guilds and corporations, surging ahead with silent persistence and growing in importance through its various associations, which were all regulated by the State. In the constitution of the State each individual had his value and his rights, and the story of the Venetian guilds, which may truly be called the story of the Venetian *popolo*, was as glorious as the political history of the Republic. We shall touch upon them briefly, for the private life of a State is in fact nothing else than one of the leading elements in the complex whole of complete national life, which, even in aristocratic governments, always contains some traces of popular ideas and sentiments.

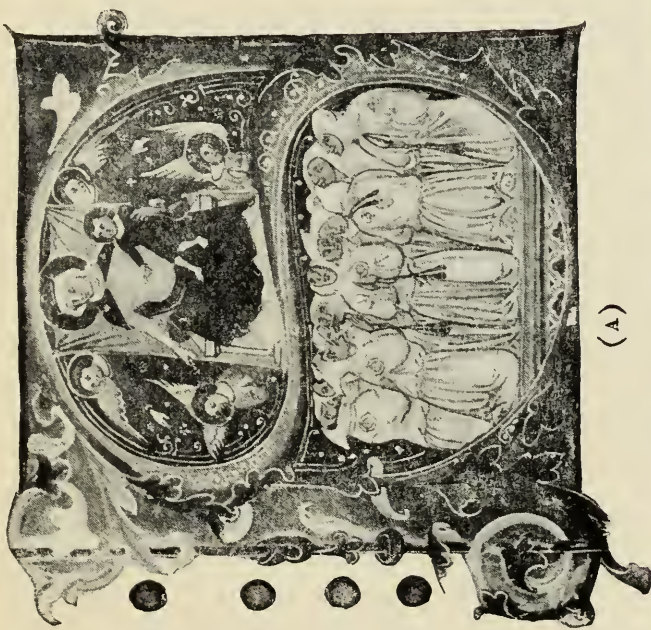
From the very outset the Roman tradition of concentrating the various arts and crafts in guilds, a tradition which survived in some provinces of Italy even

during the dark ages,<sup>1</sup> was in all probability still in force among the refugees of the lagoons. The *Cronaca Altinate*, dealing with the earliest period, records the callings of saddler, smith, carrier, shepherd, butcher, flesher, etc., and gives us a list of persons who took their surnames from these occupations and very probably formed a guild.<sup>2</sup> Tradition speaks of an association

<sup>1</sup> The survival of the guilds during the early middle ages has been denied by several writers (Solmi, *Le associazioni in Italia avanti le origini del Comune*. Modena, 1798. Roberti, *Le Corporazioni padovane d'arti e mestieri*. Venezia, 1902.) It is argued that the Roman organization of labour must have disappeared before the domination of the barbarians, who desired to sweep away all institutions which might recall their hated adversaries. That may be true of some, but it is not true of all Italian provinces. For example, after the fall of Rome, the Goths had magistrates to supervise the corn leagues; we find a guild of soap-boilers at Naples in the sixth century, and another of bakers at Otranto. The guild of the *Maestri Comacini* was recognised by the Lombard king, Rotari (636-652); as early as the date of Pope Adrian I (772-795) there were in Rome associations not only of soldiery, notaries, and pontifical choristers, but also of doctors, workmen, merchants, and artisans of all kinds. At the same period we find in Rome the *Scholae Peregrinorum* for Jews, Greeks, Saxons, Frieslanders, Lombards, and Franks; they were established first for purposes of education, but in the ninth to the eleventh centuries they undertook the care of pilgrims. These guilds, called *artes* after the trade they followed, had their statutes (*pacta*), a warden (*prior*, *primicerius*), their church, and their cemetery. Gregorovius, *St. di Roma nel M. E.*, Vol. II, p. 481. Trans. Venezia, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> Simonsfeld, *La Cronaca Altinate*, trad. (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XIX, p. 325). The following passage gives us the various callings connected with the chase, pasturing, agriculture, victualling, navigation, and salt-pans: "*De operibus et exercitiis quorundam Venetorum antiquorum. . . .* Hetolus cum matrona uxore sua et filiis suis iumentus (*jumentis*) et equibus erant custoditores: Senatores sellis erant retinentes; Pinecolii brachos (*boscus*) maiores erant vardatores; Valcarii canes observabant: Vanarii vani factores et astores custoditores: Nunj catellj nutriciones et ciatores assidue: Paschalicij grex porchorum mitentes in pastu: Cristoli castratores seu sanguelatores equorum fuerunt: Gardiacos Gauros salme ducibus factores: Ciresseos curros et hoves menaverunt, et canes navigabant: Venerii, Bavarii appellantur, ravas et caulos et porros ducebant: Bicicas beccatria retinentes erant; Beccenj yrcf comperatores seu occissores, sive in foro carnes vendentes:





(A)

A—From the Anthem Book of Sa. Maria della Carità (1365). Initial of the first page of the text. (Marciana, It. Cl. II, n. 119.)  
 B—From the Anthem Book of Sa. Maria della Carità. The procession of the brotherhood in front of their church and with their standard bearer. (Marciana, It. Cl. II, n. 119)



(B)





of box-makers (*casselleri*) in the tenth century and a passage added to the chronicle of John the Deacon mentions a guild of smiths about the year 1000. But a more trustworthy evidence as regards the craft-guilds is the decree of the Doge Polani (1143) which organises their part in public processions.<sup>1</sup> In 1173 the Doge Sebastian Ziani promulgated his victualling law, and at the same time instituted the Court *della Giustizia*, whose duty it was to enforce the regulations regarding the sale of wine, corn, fish, fruit, fowls, oil, meat, and bread.<sup>2</sup> In the year 1261 the Court *della Giustizia* was subdivided into two offices, each with three officials, called the *Giustizieri Vecchi* and the *Giustizieri Nuovi*. The first were intrusted with the supervision of all trades except the wool business, the second confined their attention to all that concerned the supply and distribution of victuals. In by-laws for the various crafts the *Giustizieri* defined the duties of the guilds towards the State, and required the artisan to swear *supra sancta dei evangelia* that he would faithfully perform them. They also inspected all factories to enforce the regulations by the punishment of offenders. The *Giustizieri* constituted a court for all disputes affecting the discipline and the practice of the trades, and thus secured their development.<sup>3</sup> During the middle ages the artisan

Bicinj herbicinj ipsi fuerunt scorticatores herbicinarum filiorum eorum, pedes de omnibus bestiis tenuerunt."

<sup>1</sup> Muratori, *Antich. Ital.*, Diss. LXXV.

<sup>2</sup> Monticolo, *L'Ufficio della Giustizia vecchia a Venezia*, pp. 6 and 40 (*Miscellanea della Deputazione Veneta di storia patria*, Vol. XII).

<sup>3</sup> Monticolo has published with copious notes the *Capitolari delle Arti Veneziane sottoposte alla Giustizia vecchia e nuova dalle origini al MCCCXXX* (pubbl. dall' Ist. stor. It., Roma, 1896, Vol. I; 1905, Vol. II). They are, for the most part, preserved in a codex at the Archivio di Stato,

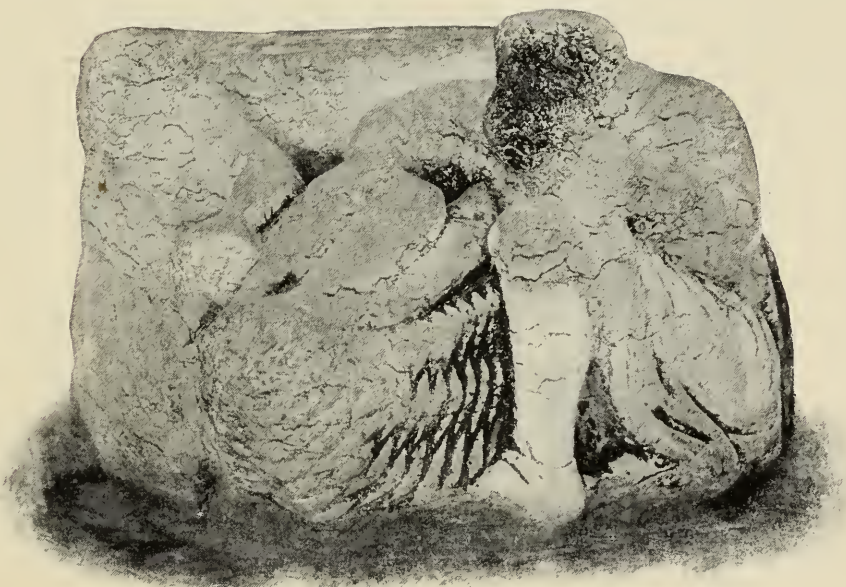
guilds performed wonders, now contributing to the political life of the State by recording their votes or taking a part in the general assemblies; now by calling the citizens to arms in the piazza for the defence of the country,<sup>1</sup> or by furnishing with extraordinary rapidity crews for the ships of war; or again all this vigour was peacefully devoted to the service of religion and directed to the building of churches and basilicas. As the freer form of the constitution gradually changed, both reasons of economy and reasons of State imposed more binding regulations upon the guilds, which, in return for privileges, were called upon to render special services to the State and to pay taxes.<sup>2</sup> As the aristocracy developed in boldness and in wealth and made itself sovereign in the State, with a view to concentrating the various arts and crafts in guilds, new statutes were passed or the existing ones were modified. The regulations imposed by the guilds themselves were gradually remodelled or abolished, and step by step the arts and crafts were brought under the surveillance of the Giustizieri, of the Censors, of the Provveditori di Comun, and of the Inquisitors of State. The govern-

marked *Giustizia Vecchia busta I, registro I*. They are divided into two groups. The first contains the acts of the court before it was divided (February, 1219-1222; November, 1261) and consists of the by-laws of the tailors, doublet makers, brick-tellers, fishmongers, oil-men, bakers, hemp-spinners, goldsmiths, hucksters, dyers, doctors, and pilots. The second group is of doubtful date, but probably anterior to the division of the court decreed by the Great Council on November 22, 1261. It contains the by-laws of the vintners, the druggists, the bow-makers, the keepers of corn measures, and the makers of weights and measures.

<sup>1</sup> Tradition tells us that on the rape of the Venetian brides by the Slave pirates, the box-makers were the first to man the boats and to give chase to the robbers and to crush them. In 1310 it was the Guild of Painters who mustered in the Campo San Luca and routed a part of Baiamonte Tiepolo's followers.

<sup>2</sup> Sagredo, *Sulle Consorterie delle Arti*, etc., cit., Cap. II.





SCULPTURES of the columns on the  
Piazzetta (early XIII century)





ment viewed with satisfaction the expansion of these institutions of a purely economic character, as they served to absorb and occupy the abundant vigour of the people, which might otherwise have proved a menace to the rigid government of the noble caste.

The people found a way to reconcile their aspirations and needs with a law which, while it protected them, was not the same for all. All wish to reclaim their lost position in the management of public affairs slowly died away after the failure of one or two conspiracies, and nobles and people, those two diverse elements in the State, after clashing at first and struggling on their diverse paths, gradually and quietly took each to its proper line of life. To remove all cause of discontent which might have induced rebellion, the government took care to show regard for the artisans, among whom the arsenal hands were objects of special favour; their foremen and master-hands had right of access to the Doge's apartments, they were intrusted with the preservation of public order, the arsenal was committed to their sole charge, and such was the confidence reposed in them by the government that no one was admitted as a workman in the mint who was not an arsenal hand, inscribed on the arsenal roll, a child of the arsenal.<sup>1</sup> Again, the art of glass-blowing was guarded with jealous care, and if the son of a patrician married a daughter of a glass-blower, he retained his right to sit in the Great Council just as though he had made a noble marriage.<sup>2</sup> The artisan, absorbed in his work and in comfortable circumstances, incessantly occupied by his trade, became an upholder of peace; he neither desired nor raised civil dissensions,

<sup>1</sup> Cassoni, *Forze militare*, cit., p. 149.

<sup>2</sup> Decree of December 22, 1376.

nor did he resent the patrician class, but rather looked on it as the protector of his prosperity and his wealth. The people, debarred from aspiring to office in the State, found an outlet for their natural pride and desire for prosperity in the new field of activity laid open to them by the guilds ; the road to fortune lay before them ; they could rise to such honourable offices as those of *massaro*, *bancale*, *gastaldo*. On the other hand, the nobles, having absorbed the sovereign power, judged it wise to win over those whom they had deprived of a voice in the State, and so showered benefits on the guilds, from which they always received a warm support down to the very end. And so the respect for the constitution, which was affirmed in solemn phrase in the opening paragraphs of the statutes of each art, found expression in fact whenever the country called for defence against attack or assurances against threats. These guilds were like so many small but vigorous republics ; they were under the protection of a patron saint, enjoyed a revenue, held a court, and were governed by statutes, assemblies, and officials ; they built guild halls and spent considerable sums on charity.<sup>1</sup> The guilds were called Scuole (*Scholae*), from the Greek σχολή,<sup>2</sup> a group of individuals. The word primarily signified the place of meeting of a lay guild of devotion. The earliest use of the name as applied to a craft-guild is to be found in a will of 1213, from which we gather that even thus early certain crafts were erected into guilds under the protection of a saint, with the right to possess and to inherit, and

<sup>1</sup> Sagredo, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> The first meaning of σχολή is rest, leisure, diversion, especially literary ; hence the word came to mean the place where letters are taught, a school, and finally, in the reigns of Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius, a group of persons.

therefore with a corporate capacity in the eye of the law.<sup>1</sup> There were three kinds of *Scholae* or guilds; the guilds of devotion,<sup>2</sup> such as the *Scholae Battulorum*, in which the brothers were united by the bond of religious piety only, and sometimes practised flagellation; the national guilds, such as the guilds of the Albanians, of the Slavs, and of other foreigners, who were under the protection of the saint of their native land; the arts- and crafts-guilds, which often chose as patron some saint who had followed their trade, as, for example, Saint Aniano for cobblers, Saint Cosma and Saint Damiano, who were doctors, for barbers.

Six of the *Scuole* were called *Scuole Grandi* on account of their importance, wealth, and rights; they were the Santa Maria della Carità, founded in 1260, San Giovanni Evangelista, Santa Maria della Misericordia, San Marco, San Rocco, and San Teodoro. Minor *Scuole* were very numerous; they were also called *Fraglie*, composed of men who were following one or other of the arts and crafts; these, too, like the *Scuole Grandi*, had their halls, or at least a chapel in some church. Some of the crafts were concentrated in a single association, others were divided into the various branches of the trade (*colonnelli*). For

<sup>1</sup> Monticolo, *La costituzione del Doge Pietro Polani*, p. 18 (Roma, Acc. dei Lincei, 1900).

<sup>2</sup> Among the guilds of devotion and of charity we may note the *Scuola dell' Annunciata de' Zoppi*, made up of lame members. The guild acquired from the Morosini an oratory, which stood in the Campo Sant' Angelo. Every year, in April, the lame brethren dined with the Contarini family at the Carità, when they sat down at the high table. The guild dowered the daughters of its members. The *zonfi* (maimed and blind) also belonged to the guild, but could not aspire to the office of warden, who by the statute was required to be *un zotto over slanchato mendicante, perchè el se die far tal gastaldo che se possi exercitar ai bisogni de la scola ai qual non potria operar se algun zonfo over orbo*. Cicogna, *Iscr. Ven.*, Vol. III, p. 186; Vol. V, p. 638.

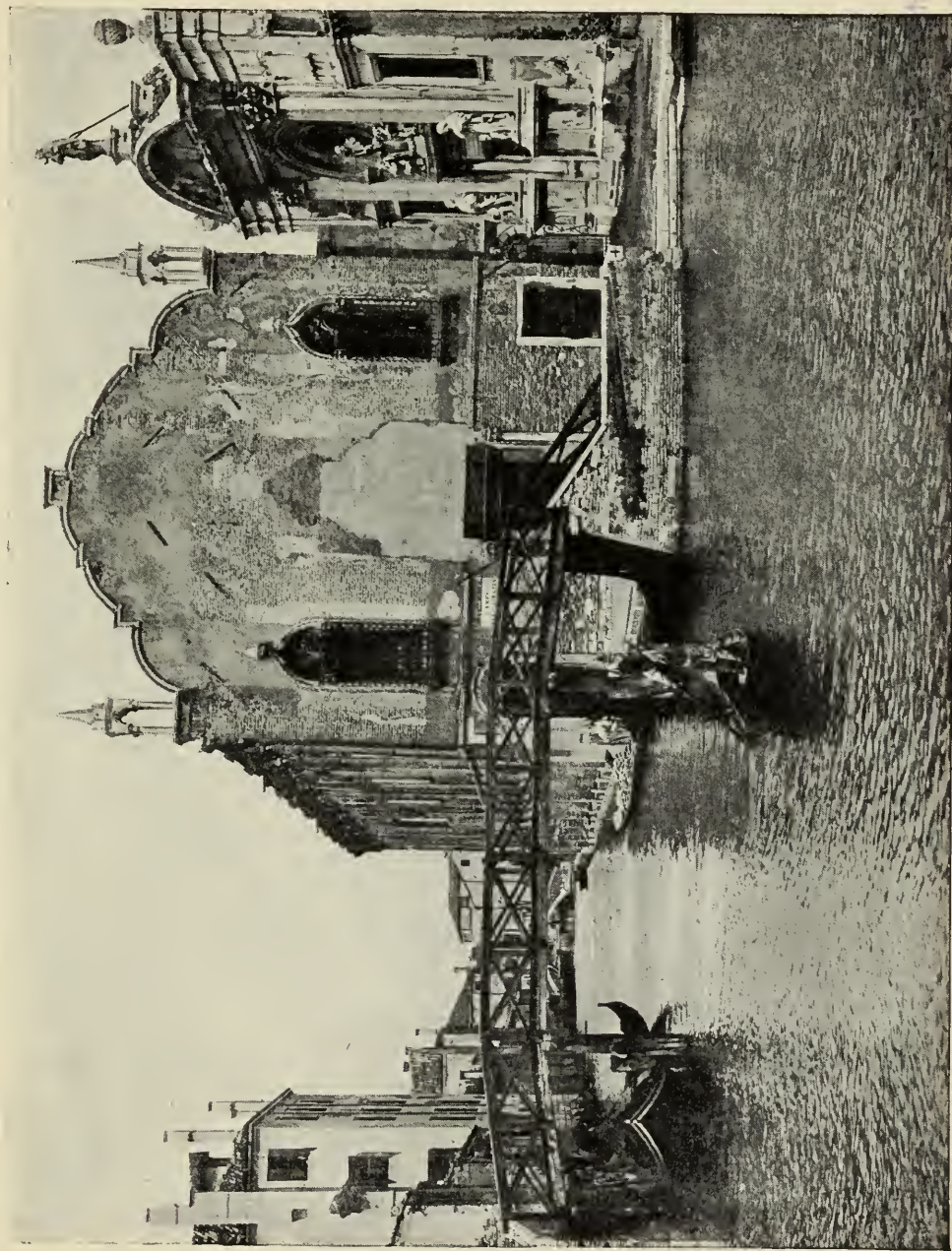


example, the mercers (*marzeri*), one of the oldest guilds, with records dating back to 942, ended by being divided into eight branches: (1) the Flanders mercers, dealing in wool, worsted, and tape; (2) manufacturers and vendors of webs and valances of gold and silver; (3) hosiers, vendors of knitted goods; (4) glovers and vendors of poudre de Chypre (*muschieri*); (5) brass workers and scale-makers; (6) iron-mongers and jewelers; (7) iron and lead merchants; (8) peddlers and vendors of wine strainers, spectacles, lutes, and musical instruments.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes of the various associations were known at first as *capitularia*, *statula*, *ordinamenta*; later on, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they were called *mariegola* (*matricula*).<sup>2</sup> The number of members was not limited, but not everybody had the right to be inscribed on the books; proof of fair repute and of skill in the craft were demanded. Prentices under twelve years of age were not eligible. Apprenticeship lasted from five to seven years; the paid hand worked for three years and then, after an examination, he was passed as a master and acquired the right to open a shop. Each member paid an annual tax — called the *taglione* — to the guild, and another tax on the returns of his earnings, called, from its lightness, the *tassa insensibile*. Chapters or general assemblies of the guild were held in the *Scuola*, called also the *Albergo*; their business was to discuss questions affecting the guild, and to elect the guild officers. As early as the tenth century the warden or head of the guild was called the *gastaldo*, the name applied in ancient times to the head men of townships subject to Venetian rule.

<sup>1</sup> Cicogna, *Iscr. Ven.*, Vol. I, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> Sagredo erroneously thinks that *mariegola* may mean *madre-regola*.



Old Guild of Misericordia





The *vicario* took the *gastaldo's* place in his absence, and the *compagni*, or members of the committee, were a treasurer, a secretary, a collector, two auditors (*sindaci*), and an assessor of the rates. No one might refuse to serve under pain of a fine. This obligation to serve is recorded for the first time in the statutes of the druggists, dating, perhaps, from April, 1258, and in a clause of the statutes of the goldsmiths of May, 1262, where the fine is fixed at ten *soldi di grossi*.<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of the Venetian constitution generally was reflected in the constitution of the guilds. Just as the aristocratic government of the State tended to restrict itself to a few privileged families, so, as though by the very compulsion to imitate, the craft-guilds, which in the middle ages gave such an admirable impulse to labour, gradually concentrated themselves in close associations hampered by prescriptions and limitations. Monopoly, especially after the fifteenth century, became systematised and stilled all advance. Just as protection was adopted by the State against foreign products, so the craft-guilds jealously guarded trade secrets and the crafts were forbidden to those not enrolled in the guild. Even among the members of a guild a species of aristocracy came into being in the *capi mistri* or master-workmen, whose sons enjoyed special privileges; they were, for example, exempt from apprenticeship, from service as a paid hand, and from the examination for the master's certificate. It was not, however, a rigidly close aristocracy; it was always alive and renewing itself, for each apprentice knew that when he had served his time, done his three years as a paid hand, and passed his examination he would become a *capo mistro* and would leave to his sons the privilege of

<sup>1</sup> Monticolo, *Capitolari*, p. 37, n. 2.



reaching the same rank without apprenticeship or examination.

Among the Venetian artisans patriotism and solidarity, no small factors in their power, were inspired by a genuine religious fervour, and Venetian guilds did not, like the French associations, break into two distinct branches, the one purely lay and economic, the other religious, but both forms remained fused and united together.<sup>1</sup> In the guild statutes we find the religious sentiment closely allied to the highest practical aspirations, and the opening paragraphs, which invoke the protection of God, of the Virgin, and of the saints, and prescribe the use of pious ceremonies, are followed by instructions and rules abounding in practical common sense and utility. For example, the governing body of a guild is required to pay close attention to all that is needed for carrying on the industry, *cum prode et honore domini ducis et communis Veneciarum* (*Statuto pelizeri d'ovra vera*). Raw material of a bad quality is not to be employed, and in some of the crafts the rate of wages is fixed, and so too the quality of the goods.<sup>2</sup> The quality of both gold and silver was prescribed for the goldsmiths; false gems were prohibited, such as crystals tinted to imitate topaz, ruby, sapphire, or emerald. Vendors of corn or vegetables were obliged to have their goods measured in the exchange *cum iusto staro vel quarta aut mensura bullata cum bulla comunis Veneciarum*. The hemp spinners were supervised by three inspectors, to insure

<sup>1</sup> Roberti, op. cit., p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Monticolo, *Capitolari*, etc., p. 129, n. 5, p. 137. By the *Capitolare* of the hucksters they are forbidden to sell *nè in Rialto nè in San Marco nè in su le barche nè per le contrade nè in stazion nè sul ponte alcuna cossa zeneralmente che speta a la merzaria, nè cortelli, nè feramenti, nè fabrication alcuna, nè conche, nè lavezi, nè caldiere . . . salvo vitualie*.

the legal standard. Fish, especially fish from Chioggia and Poveglia, was brought *al palo*, that is, to a tall pole, where it was valued, paid a due, and was sold. The fish-market was daily inspected for the destruction of rotten fish.<sup>1</sup>

The master was bound to give his apprentice several days' warning if he intended to dismiss him, and so too the apprentice if he intended to leave his master. It was forbidden to "seduce" (*incantare vel maliciare*), by promises or offers of higher wage, a paid workman to leave his master for another before the expiry of his contract.<sup>2</sup> On its side the government punished severely all those who endeavoured to tempt away from Venice a master-workman: *aliqua persona non audeat vel praesumat tractare seu tractari facere per se vel alios, directe vel indirecte, de extraendo aliquem de Venetiis, qui sit caput alicuius misterii vel artis, pro eundo ad aliquas partes mundi, sub poena standi sex annis in uno carcerum inferiorum.*<sup>3</sup> The Murano glass-blower who abandoned his country was treated as a traitor, and it was absolutely forbidden to export from the lagoons either material or tools employed in the manufacture of glass. Every guild was bound to declare stolen goods that might have come into their hands.<sup>4</sup> No work was permitted at night<sup>5</sup> as a rule; but if in certain industries this could not be avoided, the working year was restricted, as in the case of the glass-blowers (thirteenth century), to seven months, from January to August, during which the work went on

<sup>1</sup> The principal fish-markets were at San Marco and Rialto.

<sup>2</sup> Monticolo, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, Pregadi, December 31, 1381.

<sup>4</sup> A very ancient obligation first met with in the *Capitolare* of the tailors, February, 1219. Monticolo, *Capitolari*, *cit.*, p. 40, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, p. 29.

day and night, by shifts, and the furnaces were not blown except on the feasts named in the statutes.<sup>1</sup> In certain trades it was forbidden to employ children under eight years of age; in others child labour in tiring or injurious trades was prohibited. For instance, in the glass-cutter's statutes we find *puellae vel pueri non audeant laborare ad meriglum (emery) vel a calore ad plumbeum*.<sup>2</sup>

These wise provisions were inspired not only by philanthropic sentiment, but by the practical desire to keep the population sound, for the prudent aristocracy required that the labourers and the defenders of the State should be maintained in health. We have an example in England, where the factory laws protecting women and children were passed, not by the democracy but by the landed aristocracy.

As early as 1271 the Venetian guilds, putting into practice for the first time the sacred principles of economy and mutual aid, resolved to devote a certain portion of their revenues to the relief of the poor and the sick, who were visited by the *gastaldo*, or by one of the governing body,<sup>3</sup> to attend the funerals of deceased members, and to keep a lamp burning over the common tomb.<sup>4</sup> Later on, widows and orphans received pensions, and some craft-guilds opened hospitals for sick members.

These associations were administered like a well-regulated family, having no other scope than *de stare*

<sup>1</sup> Monticolo, *Capitolari*, pp. 181, 182.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Giustizia Vecchia*, Cod. Brera, Vol. II, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Mariegola della Scuola di Sant' Orsola del 1300*, Cap. VI.

<sup>4</sup> The oldest instance of aid to poor and infirm members is to be found in the *Capitolare* of the tanners, October 12, 1271, and the *luminaria mortuorum* is first mentioned in the *Capitolare* of the bottle-blowers, February 14, 1271. Monticolo, *Capitolari*, etc., p. 18, n. 3, and p. 20, n. 4.



*in lo amor de Dio e de santa paxe.*<sup>1</sup> Other provisions were made for the observance of feasts, for, as the statutes of the hucksters have it, the feasts should be *vardade como de razon se die, perchè no vardandole non sè honor de la tera*. On civil and religious festivals the guilds vied with each other in the richness of their decorations. Each had its own banner, and once a year, besides the feast day of its special patron saint, the guild went in procession to San Marco, preceded by its herald, to make its offering of many pounds of wax, *per obbligo di riconoscimento*. On Saint Mark's day, the festival of the whole community, every guild, headed by its *gonfalon*, went to the basilica in procession, defiling before the Doge's throne, and bearing with them numberless relics of saints enclosed in reliquaries of gold and silver studded with precious stones, and surrounded by a blaze of light and clouds of incense from candelabras and censers of precious metal and of exquisite workmanship.

The glorious history of the Venetian guilds is engraved on the stones of Venetian monuments, and side by side with the work of ideal religious art we get representations of the actual busy life of the people. The angles at the base of the two columns of the piazzetta are adorned with rude sculpture of the thirteenth century, each one giving us two little crouching figures holding between them either a basket of fish, or smiths' or carpenters' tools. On the inner face of the third archivolt of the façade of San Marco we find the emblems of the more ordinary trades in Venice of the fourteenth century, — boat-builders (*squeraroli*), vintners (*magazinieri*), bakers (*fornéri*), butchers (*becchéri*), masons (*muréri*), shoemakers (*caleghéri*), coopers,

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Mariegiola della Scuola di Sant' Orsola*, Cap. VI.



(*bottéri*), carpenters (*marangoni*), smiths (*fravi*), fishermen and milkmen (*pestrini*), barbers, and surgeons.<sup>1</sup> On a capital of the lower loggia of the Ducal Palace the rulers of the State caused to be carved certain figures representing the arts, with the following inscriptions: *Lapidarius, Aurifex, Cerdo sum, Carpentarius, Mensurator, Agrichola, Faber sum*; the eighth figure represents a liberal profession, *Notarius*.

The magnificent buildings erected by some of the guilds, and the admirable paintings and sculpture which adorn them, in proof that the worship of beauty illuminated the rough road of practical life, serve to demonstrate the opulence of these confraternities. The members of the guilds in their early days were wont to meet in some modest chamber, or more usually in the sacristy of a church, where they also had the chapel of their patron saint. Then some of the richer bodies built hard by the church a little hall or *Scuola*, such as the *Scuola di Sant' Orsola*, attached to the church of San Giovanni e Paolo and adorned in 1490 by the Carpaccio. These little *scuole* gradually grew into buildings of conspicuous size and beauty. In 1308 the *Scuola di Santa Maria della Misericordia* was built. It is a great gothic pile, and above the door, down to a few years ago, was a beautiful bas-relief by Bartolomeo Buono representing the Madonna crowned and sheltering under her mantle the kneeling brothers, who gaze up with adoration to the features of their divine protectress. Above another door, on the *fondamenta*, the Virgin and brothers of the guild are again represented in a bas-relief of still earlier date, one of the most notable

<sup>1</sup> In the fourteenth century codex entitled *Chronologia magna ab origine mundi ad annum millesimum trecentesium quadragesimum sextum* (Bibl. Marc.), various crafts and professions are represented.



(A)



(B)

A—HOUSES of the Ghetto. B—Giovanni da Bologna—The brothers of the Guild of S. Giovanni Evangelista. (XIV century.) (Royal Galleries of Venice)





monuments of Venetian mediæval sculpture. In 1534 Sansovino built a new *Scuola* of the Misericordia, close to the old one, which was ceded to the silk weavers.

The religious guild of the flagellants, originally housed at Sant' Apollinare, removed in 1307 to the church of San Giovanni Evangelista, and in 1340 they commenced to build hard by a hall completed, it would seem, in 1481. It is a building of exquisite beauty and magnificence, worthy of the great confraternity, whose revenue amounted to eighteen thousand ducats a year and among whose members were to be found great personages and even princes like Philip II of Spain. Later on rose other *Scuole*, such as the sumptuous structures of San Marco and San Rocco.

Thus in this great centre of commerce and of political life there came to light and flourished those institutions which were the precursors of the principles of thrift, association, and mutual aid—in a word, of modern political economy. Pauperism was combated by industry; men, early bred in practical views of life, kept their bodies and their minds in active exercise, and resisting the corruption of prosperity, were enabled to face every passing misfortune. Even as early as the fourteenth century we are told that every Venetian possessed something, and up to a certain point all were therefore on an equality. Genuine poverty was sharply distinguished from mendicity, and begging was branded as shameful; for there was not a Venetian who could not find work in the vineyards, the fisheries, the salt-pans, the chase, the crafts, the marine, or the commerce of the city.<sup>1</sup> If Venetians were not all equal in their rights, if the people were excluded from the political life of the State, they still saw their economic life, which, thanks

<sup>1</sup> De Monacis, *De rebus Venetis*, pp. 23, 33. Venetiis, Remondini, 1758.



to the principles of association, maintained itself down to the very end, expanding in ever greater glories. The greatest crime committed by false French ideas of liberty against the prosperity and freedom of Italy was the sudden suppression of the guilds and the appropriation of their revenues by the State. They should have been reformed, not suppressed. Seeing that certain monopolies and privileges were no longer in the spirit of the age, and that the exercise of a craft should be free to all, the guilds should have been thrown open, but not abolished; to destroy them was to kill thrift and mutual aid and to create the modern proletariat. When old age brought with it sickness and penury the artisan no longer sought support from his brothers, but from the State; he no longer begged lodging and care from the little almshouses maintained by each craft, but had recourse to the huge hospitals erected by the Comune for the public use. The people in their days of distress became accustomed to look to the public for charity, whereas the government of Venice, by a wise protection of the artisan from all oppression by the stronger, had educated him in the honourable principles of sufficing for himself and in the severe discipline of thrift.

And seeing that nothing was neglected in the admirable development of Venetian prosperity, the industry of the Jews was made to contribute to the national wealth. We cannot, of course, believe that Venice did not apply to the Jews the same restrictions and prohibitions which were enforced by other nations, but it is certain that the Republic permitted the Jews the free exercise of their rites, protected their persons and their property, and maintained the *condotte*, that is, the special conditions accorded to them for a temporary

sojourn. Venetian intelligence grasped from the outset the fact that the vast capital of the Jews must inevitably assist industry and feed commercial activity.

Jews are found in Venice from the earliest times, if only as commercial travellers and agents for Greek houses, and in 1152 they numbered one thousand three hundred. In all probability they were free to trade just as they were free to practise medicine.<sup>1</sup> The Jews of the mainland were settled at Mestre; those who traded with Dalmatia lived on the island of Spinalunga, which, notwithstanding opinions to the contrary, changed its name to Giudecca precisely for that reason.<sup>2</sup> In 1374 many of the Mestre Jews received the permission, known as the *condotta*, which allowed them to reside in Venice for five years, and this term was prolonged. As neither pawnshops nor public banks which could make advances were yet in existence, and as Venetian law forbade usury on pledged goods, the government intended in this way to give the poor the opportunity of meeting their needs by having recourse to Jewish money-lenders, whose rapacity was kept in bounds by special acts.<sup>3</sup> Other concessions followed. In 1386 they were granted a cemetery on the Lido, with leave to put a palisade round it to protect it from violation by the mob (*propter enormia quae fiebant ad corpora Judaeorum*).<sup>4</sup> The government also granted special privileges to Jews who had distinguished them-

<sup>1</sup> Schiavi, *Gli Ebrei in Venezia e nelle sue Colonie* (Nuova Antologia, Vol. XLVII, p. 311. Roma, 1893).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> On July 13, 1389, a Levi and his sister (*Levi judeus et soror sua*), with the consent of the Senate, opened a bank with a capital of five thousand ducats of gold. They were allowed to make advances at eight per cent. on security and at ten per cent. without (*Arch. Veneto*, T. XXXII, p. 386).

<sup>4</sup> Cornaro, *Eccl. Ven.*, T. I, p. 118.

selves ; thus in 1268 a ducal decree of Lorenzo Tiepolo confers on David the Jew, of Negropont, Venetian citizenship as a reward for his merits ; and in 1313 Leone, a famous physician, is allowed to exercise his calling without the usual examination before the *Gius-tizieri*.<sup>1</sup> But neither favours nor restrictions served to hold usury in check, and in 1395 the Jews, who refused to lend on bonds but insisted on having pledges in gold, silver, pearls, and gems to such an extent that one may say that *totum mobile Venetie* was in their hands, were expelled and an order passed that no Jew might reside in Venice more than fifteen days and that they must wear on their breasts a yellow O — *non possit stare in Venetiis aliquis Judaeus ultra XV dies pro qualibet vice, qua veniret Venetias, et de quando steterit aliquis Judaeus in Venetiis elapso dicto termine, debeat portare in veste superiori supra pectus unum O zallum . . . quod sit bene apparens*.<sup>2</sup> This sign was converted first into a yellow cap and then into a hat covered first of all with red and then with black wax-

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Liber Brutus*, fol. 126.

<sup>2</sup> "MCCCLXXXV . . . die III mensis aprilis. Cum in MCCCLXXXVIII de mense augusti captum et provisum fuerit pro honore nostri Dominii et bono universitatis Venetiarum quod completo termino Judeorum qui complet de MCCCLXXXVI non possit predicis Judeis amplius elongari terminus nec de novo concedi eisdem quod possint mutare in Veneciis publice vel occulte ad usuram sub pena in parte contenta, et etiam per dictam partem datus ordo est quod elapso dicto termine aliquis Judeus non possit stare in Veneciis ultra quindecim dies pro vice et quod portare debeant unum O etc. prout in dicta pars serius continetur. Et inter infrascriptos consiliarios dubium fiat si dicta pars extenditur et observari debeat in Judeos qui exercent artem medicinae et non prestant ad usuram, qui vivunt de sua arte absque mutando ad usuram vel non, Vadit pars per modum declarationis. Et primo. — Capta. Quod dicta pars capta in Rogatis intelligatur pro omnibus Judeis qui quomodocumque et cuiuscumque conditionis existant se reperiant, seu reperient imposterum in Veneciis." (Arch. di Stato, M. C., *Leona*, p. 78 t.)



cloth. After the decree of expulsion the Jews withdrew to Mestre, but appeared in Venice from time to time, and even stayed there beyond the fifteen days, in spite of renewed orders from the government on the subject. Jews were forbidden to hold real estate, to have carnal commerce with Christian women, even if harlots, to keep schools of any kind, even of dancing, singing, or music. The profession of doctor was the only one they were allowed to follow, and in this they were excellent.<sup>1</sup> Later on, however, they succeeded in securing a longer *condotta* and gradually spread themselves over the town, until in 1516 they were all enclosed in the Ghetto.<sup>2</sup> Here the men opened old-clothes shops and pawn-brokers' benches, while the women, with their remarkable quality of family devotion, attended to their household work and to making the variegated stuffs belonging to the various countries from which they came.<sup>3</sup> They were expelled again in 1527 and confined to their old quarters at Mestre, but were readmitted in 1533, and next year they established their confraternity

<sup>1</sup> The order of 1395 says: "Quod non intelligatur de Judeis medicis, sicut sunt magister Salomon et alii Judei medici acceptati per officiales justitie veteris qui sunt seu venient Venecias et honeste vivant, sine mutare ad usuram qui possint stare, sicut stant ad presens."

<sup>2</sup> The Ghetto lay between San Geremia and San Girolamo; it was surrounded by a high wall. The Jews were shut in from sunset to sunrise, and also on certain feasts of the Christian calendar. Marin Sanudo (Vol. XXIV, p. 45, March, 1517) says: "Perchè li zudei è andati star in Geto e butano le imonditie in aqua, sia preso che a loro spexe si fazi uno locho di scovaze." Many think that the Ghetto took its name from the fact that in Venice the place chosen for confining the Jews was once the public foundry. But Sanders and others (*Fremdwörterbuch*, Leipzig, 1891) give the derivation as probably from *ghet*, Talmud-Arabic for *division*, *separation*; and as a matter of fact in the mediæval Hebrew of the Talmudists, though not in the archaic Hebrew of the Scriptures, *get* and *gittâ* are the names for a *writing of divorce*.

<sup>3</sup> Schiavi, op. cit., p. 499.



of the *Università degli Ebrei*. This guild was not only called on to find the capital for pawnbrokers' business in the Ghetto, but was also very heavily taxed by government and gradually declined. To prevent complete ruin the three *Inquisitori sopra l'Università degli Ebrei* were named in 1722, but to no purpose; finally, about half a century later, the doors of the Ghetto were levelled and the Jews declared free and equal with the rest of the population.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MARTIAL EXERCISES — SPORTS AND FESTIVALS — THE COMPANY OF “THE HOSE”

VENETIAN festivals received a peculiar imprint from the character of the people, the nature of the city, and the mildness of the climate, which enabled the inhabitants to spend a large part of their daily life on the piazza or in the streets. The government itself led the way and, in the setting of that singular city, offered to the people public spectacles which were the outward expression of lofty ideals and noble sentiments.

In those early days the instinct of sport was coupled with the desire to rear a race of strong and hardy youths, and the Republic never failed to stimulate the rivalry of her townsfolk by games and contests and gymnastic displays. Even when the government became concentrated in a few families, the nobles did not deprive the people of their arms; they rather encouraged the use of them in martial exercises that bred a hardy race of soldier-sailors ready to face the perils of the deep, not merely in pursuit of trade, but also to defend their country from assaults. Seeing that the use of the bow was recognised as *utile ymo necessarium*,<sup>1</sup> all pains were taken to render Venetians trained archers. On each

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Misti*, Vol. VI, p. 37, February 25, 1364.

festival all the lads who had reached fifteen years of age went over to San Niccolò del Lido, where at the butts they acquired a strong wrist and a steady eye. The headman in every district of the city was bound by oath to enroll as bowmen all those who had reached fifteen years of age and were under thirty-five. These were divided into companies of twelve (*duodene*) each with an officer in command,<sup>1</sup> whose duty it was to take his men to the butts and there *balestrare continuamente e puramente senza alcuna falacia cum le balestre che sia bone et sufficiente*.<sup>2</sup> The *duodene* were a kind of national guard, composed of nobles and people alike, and therefore the officer in command might be either a noble or a common man. Rich and poor, young, middle-aged, in the city or in garrison, all alike were bowmen, and show us, as it were, the whole nation under arms. On board every merchantman there were bound to be four at first, later even more, young nobles, over twenty years of age, as bowmen.<sup>3</sup>

In 1299, in the more open spaces of the city itself, butts were erected.<sup>4</sup> More were ordered by the law of November 3, 1304; a decree of 1340 required that *ballestrerius ludus fiat per contractas*; finally an order of the Council of Ten, while reaffirming *exercitium balistandi multum utile et fructuosum terrae nostrae*, appointed an officer for each *sestiere* whose duty it was to watch over, renew, or remove the butts, which were found chiefly at San Vitale, in the Barbaria

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Documents G, oaths of the headman of a district and of the officer in command of a *duodena*.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Liber Novella*, p. 121, February 26, 1356. *Liber partium A*, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 311.





An Archer—detail of a picture by  
Carpaccio. (Academy of Venice)





delle Tavole, at San Geremia, at Santa Fosca, at San Polo, at San Giacomo dell' Orio, at Santa Margherita, at the Giudecca, and at San Francesco della Vigna.<sup>1</sup> The acts of the Council of Ten give us full and precise details as to the institution of ranges and shooting matches on the *lido*, and we can picture to ourselves the brilliant spectacle, the glint of armour, the flags flying, the smiles of noble dames and pretty maidens. The first march of the year was held at Christmas. When the bowmen reached the butts, lots were drawn for places, *quis debeat esse primus quis secundus*; the first to hit the mark received *brachia decem scarlati* (scarlet cloth), the second six, and the third a bow and quiver.<sup>2</sup>

The second great match at the *lido* was held on the first Sunday in March. The first prize was *brachia decem borselle*, the second was *brachia sex borselle*, and the third *unam balistam cum uno carcassio*. The third match took place in May, and *ille qui primo dabat in signo* got *brachia decem tintilane* (cloth dyed with cochineal), the second six, and the third *unam balistam cum crocho*.<sup>3</sup>

It is not to be wondered at if these young soldiers in the heyday of their vigour should have sometimes broken out

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Misti*, Vol. IV, p. 32; Vol. VI, pp. 28, 62, 81; Vol. VII, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> When a bowman wished to charge his crossbow he put the bow on the ground, holding the butt toward his breast. He then took the stock in his left hand, put his right foot in the stirrup, and bending down caught the string in a hook attached to his waist by a strong leather thong; then straightening himself he put the string in the notch of the trigger. When aiming, the bowman held the bow with his left hand, put the butt under his right armpit, and pressed the stock to his side with his right hand. He then aimed and pressed the bent iron trigger; this freed the string, and the bolt was shot. Monticolo, *Capitolari*, etc., p. 173, n. 1. Carpaccio's pictures give us valuable illustrations of the forms both of ships and of weapons.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Misti*, Vol. VI, pp. 130, 131.

into contentions and violence. The books called the *Raspe*, which contain the list of criminal condemnations, tell us not only of certain round marbles which the bowmen used to fire at the windows and the poultry yards of peaceable citizens, but also of knifing and murder.

The Venetians were fond of fishing and of the chase, and both contributed to render them strong and active. Wild boar and bears were hunted in the forests toward the Livenza,<sup>1</sup> or in the oak groves near the Abbey of Sant' Ilario, to which the hunter was bound to give by way of tribute the head and a quarter of every animal he slew. When the Doge went hunting there the monks were bound to furnish him with horses and carts, and to keep his falcons and his hounds.<sup>2</sup> In the woods of Jesolo they shot pheasants and partridges, and chamois were found on the shores of Caorle. Snares were spread from poles to catch falcons on the island of Saccagnana and the island of Falconera, which took its name from them. The shores were covered with a thick growth of wood which gave shelter to numbers of birds, such as wild ducks, plovers, divers, sarselles, coots, widgeons, and magpies. In the fish-stews they not only took fish, but also shot all kinds of waterfowl. They went ducking in light boats called *fisolere*, from *fisolò*, the diver. Before gunpowder was invented it would appear that they used the blowpipe, for many pellets of terra cotta about the size of a hazel nut, probably used to shoot birds, have been found.

In the early days of Venice fierce fraternal feuds rendered the populace bold. They took one side or

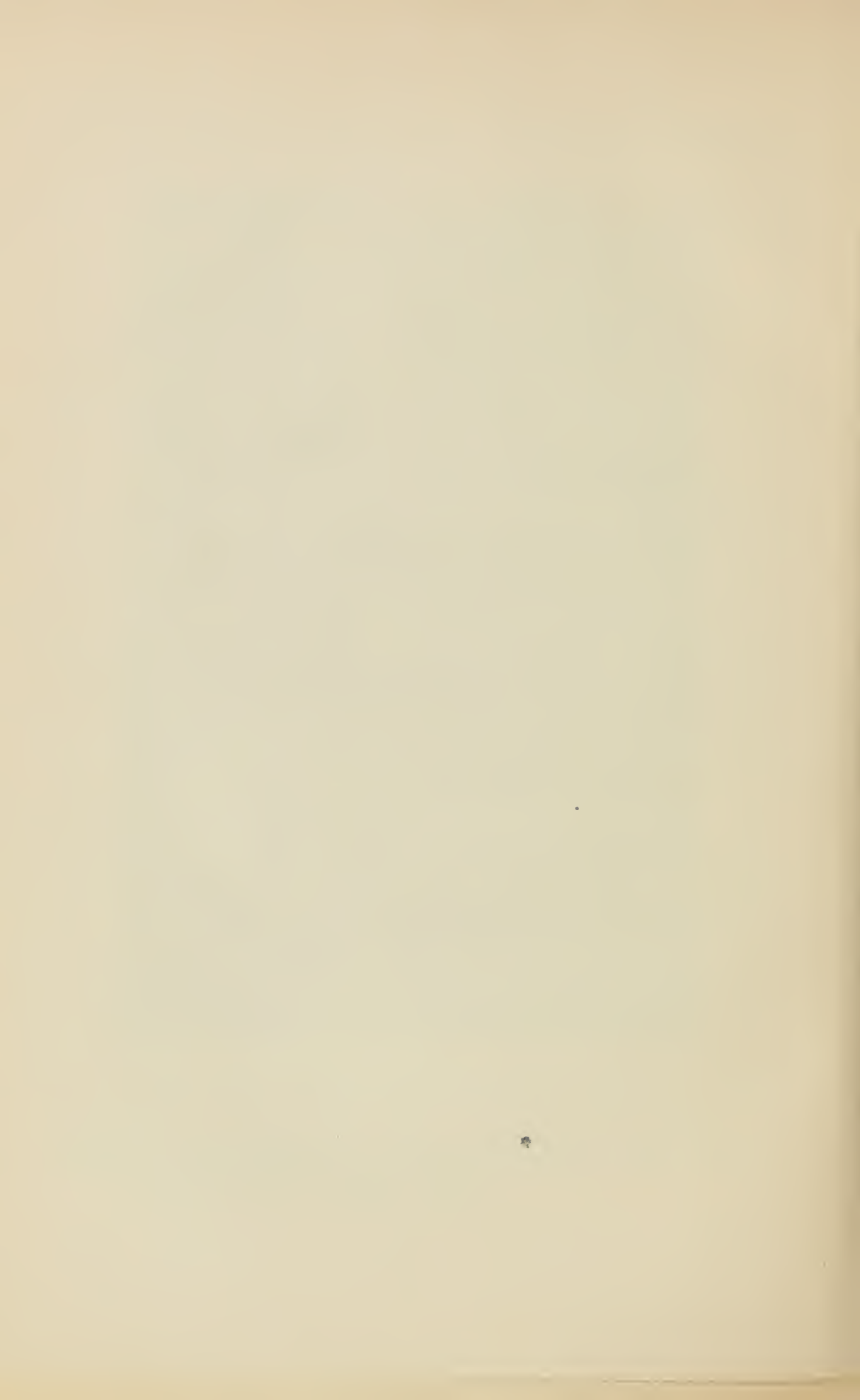
<sup>1</sup> *Cod. Trevisaneo*, Doc. 81. The convention between Ottone Orseolo and the people of Heraclea.

<sup>2</sup> Filiasi, *Mem.*, cit., Vol. VII.



HUNTING on the Lagoon — from the “Customs  
of Men and Women of Venice, etc.,” by Giacomo  
Franco, 1610





the other, and gave vent to their rivalries in games of courage and dexterity. The battles with stout Indian bamboos, which used to be waged between the people of Heraclea and Jesolo, were continued under another name and form in the new city of Rialto. In the reign of Sebastian Ziani (1172-1178), the people divided themselves into two factions: the Castellani, — who occupied the eastern parts of the city, Castello, San Marco, and Dossoduro, — and the Nicolotti, originally called Cannaruoli, who held the remaining *sestieri* of Santa Croce, San Polo, and Cannaregio.<sup>1</sup> The rivalry ran high and passions were roused. The battles with bamboos, no doubt, were the origin of the fights with fists. Every one was expected to know how to wrestle, and wrestling was of the roughest kind; all catches were allowed, so was kicking, wringing the neck, strangling, and even the use of the cudgel.<sup>2</sup> The fights with fists began in 1292,<sup>3</sup> and as time went on they were usually held between September and Christmas; they took place on bridges without parapets, and many of the champions were hurled into the water.<sup>4</sup> On the other

<sup>1</sup> In 1307 five parishes of Dorsoduro passed over to the Nicolotti: San Niccolò dei Mendicoli, Angelo Raffaele, San Basilio, Santa Margherita, and San Pantaleone. This is how it happened. Those parishes having refused to pay the death dues to the Bishop of Castello, Ramberto Polo, he went in person to exact them by force, but was killed at the spot called Malcanton. The five parishes were excommunicated and joined the Cannaruoli.

<sup>2</sup> Novati, *Il fior di battaglia* (Flos duellatorum) di M<sup>o</sup> Fiore dei Liberi da Premariacco, p. 52. Bergamo, 1902.

<sup>3</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> “Plures cadunt in aquam, quod letale, quia madentes sudore.” De Ville, *Pycnomachia Veneta* (Grevii, *Thes. Antiq.*, T. V, Part IV. Lugduni, 1722). These fisticuffs went on down to the eighteenth century, when they were dropped. Cf. among the many descriptions *La guerra dei Nicolotti e Castellani dell' anno 1521*. Venezia, 1603. (Gamba, *Poeti antichi in dialetto Veneto*, T. I). *Descrittione piacevole della guerra di pugnì*, etc. Basnatio

hand the *Forze d' Ercole* were sports of equilibrium and agility rather than of strength. They consisted in piling up human pyramids of various shapes, and they date back to the thirteenth century. The platform upon which these living pyramids were built was either boards laid on barrel-heads, if the show took place on land, or else across two boats (*piatte*), if on water. Frequently, when the *Forze* were finished, Nicolotti and Castellani would join in the *Moresca*, a kind of war dance in which they used blunted daggers and thrust and parried to a marked rhythm, moving round and round in a circle. To understand the nature of these games we must have recourse to engravings which belong to a much later period, but still serve as evidence for earlier times.

The regatta, too, which eventually became a sumptuous public spectacle, had its origin in trials of strength and skill. In fact the government used to keep boats ready at the piazzetta to carry the bowmen over to their practice at the ranges on the *lido*. These boats had thirty and even sometimes forty oars, and were called *ganzaruoli*. They were drawn up in line (*riga, rigata*<sup>1</sup>), with their prows towards the *lido*, and used to challenge one another to the race, and thus their crews became able oarsmen for the war galleys. The earliest record

Sorsi. Venetia, 1663 (in Gamba's *Serie degli scritti impressi in dial Ven.*, p. 120). We also have an account in Latin macheronics entitled, *Pugna Pugnorum sive Venetiarum pugilatus auctore Antonio Reggia*, published for the Treves-Todros wedding, Venezia, 1844. Reggia was an advocate of Padua in the eighteenth century. In 1676 Domenico Rossetti, the engraver, produced from the drawing of Pietro Liberi a great print of a fight with fists.

<sup>1</sup> Others hold that the word *regata*, as it were *aurigata*, is derived from *auriga, aurigare*, whence also comes the word *gara*. As we also find the form *ragata*, others again derive it from *ramus, remo*, an oar. We also have *ramigium, remeggio*, whence *ramigata* and *ragata*.





*Perche si e passato a tanto eccitato di contesa, che con i legni seguono spesso grand' inconuenienti la bazzola, le e ridotta ai pugni, la qual cosa passa con molto diletto de riguardanti et. ardire de combattenti.*





of a regatta is in 1300, and fifteen years later an order was issued creating an annual regatta on the feast of the conversion of Saint Paul, the tenth of January. In those days galleys and great boats (*platos aptos ad regattam*) rowed by fifty men took part in the contest. Later on, in 1493, even the women rowed in the lighter boats, and the company of "The Hose" encouraged the pretty show by offering prizes and following the race in picturesque costumes and splendid trappings.<sup>1</sup>

Another show much in vogue was the *cazza* or bullfight, of very ancient origin.<sup>2</sup> The Venetian bullfights, however, were not, as they are still in Spain, barbarous spectacles in which human life was risked; they did not employ wild bulls, but tame oxen, and the sport was to cut the head off at a single stroke.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes the ox was held by ropes fastened to his horns, while he was worried by dogs till he fell. Women occasionally took one of the cords. The baiting of the bull was celebrated by the people with strange sports, such as killing the cat, chasing the duck in the water, and so on.

In the twelfth century all Italy was swept towards the worship of beauty, sumptuousness, luxury, and light living.<sup>4</sup> This love of elegance and of chivalrous bearing took firmest hold on a district hard by Venice,

Che Tagliamento ed Adice richinde.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cicogna, *Lettera a G. di Prata intorno ad alcune regate Ven.* in the appendix to a poem by Prata on the regatta. Venezia, 1856.

<sup>2</sup> Cicogna, *Iscr. Ven.*, Vol. III, p. 467.

<sup>3</sup> Sanudo, *Diarii*, XXV, 126. On the last Sunday of carnival, bullfights took place in the courtyard of the Ducal Palace. Sanudo says that they had bear-baiting as well.

<sup>4</sup> Rajna, *Le fonti dell' Orlando Furioso*, Introd., p. 9. Firenze, 1876.

<sup>5</sup> *Paradiso*, IV, 44.

The March of Treviso acquired the name of the *Marca amorosa* or *gioiosa*, from its worship of all that was graceful in life, from its splendid festivals and the welcome extended to the French troubadours at the courts of the Ezzelini and Caminesi. At Treviso the stranger met with cavalcades or assisted at tourneys and jousts; celebrated above all was the *fête* of the Castello d'Amore in 1214. A wooden castle was erected at Spineda (near Mestre) and hung with garlands, drapery, and carpets; it was held by noble maids of Treviso armed with flowers, fruit, and scented waters, and was attacked by young cavaliers from all parts of the Veneto armed in like graceful fashion. The sly Venetians added to the flowers and Oriental spices some ducats of gold as well, and won the day. The Paduans, enraged at their defeat, came to blows with their fortunate rivals of San Marco, and thereon followed a war which was closed by the rout of the Paduans at Torre delle Bebbe near Chioggia.

Nor was life less gay in Padua. The *fête* given on Pentecost, 1208, in Pra della Valle is famous. The whole population — noble dames, cavaliers, patri-cians, citizens, young and old, each dressed in the costume of his quarter — flocked together in a joyous crowd.<sup>1</sup>

Venice did not escape the infection, and Rolandino,<sup>2</sup> the Paduan chronicler, makes mention of the courts held there with sumptuous sports in which the dance,

<sup>1</sup> Rolandino, *Chr.*, T. I, cap. 20.

<sup>2</sup> That these courts were held in Venice we may gather from words of remonstrance addressed by Ezzelino da Romano to the Venetian ambassadors. It seems that Ezzelino's father with eleven gentlemen went to one of these courts in 1206, but the Senate laid a trap for him and one of his suite was mistaken for him, on account of his sumptuous dress, and was killed. Rolandino, T. II, cap. 14.





THE REGATTA — FROM THE “PLAN OF VENICE” BY DE’ BARBARI



the song, musical and military games, jugglers and mimes, *fêtes* and banquets followed one another in quick succession.

Another favourite sport in vogue during the middle ages was the tourney, a school of arms that gradually developed until it became a powerful element in civilisation by evolving the customs of chivalry and the laws of honour. No city in the world had a finer field for jousts and tourneys than the Piazza di San Marco. Of the many tourneys there run we have records dating back to the thirteenth century; one is mentioned in 1242, another in 1253, on the occasion of the election of the Doge Rinieri Zeno, a third in 1272. This tourney was fully described by the chronicler Martino da Canal. It was run by six gentlemen from Friuli: Tartaro della Frattina, Francesco di Sbroiavacca, Giovanni d'Azzano, Enrico da Fiume, Vangusso da Annone, Massuto da Santo Stefano. For years the people of Friuli had enjoyed the reputation of being first-rate swordsmen; we find records and names of fencers, both native and foreign, in early Friulan documents, and between 1340 and 1350 there was born at Premariacco, near Ciuidale, Fiore dei Liberi, father of Italian fencing, author of the *Flos Duellatorum*.

The Friulan champions in the tourney of 1272 fought during the three days preceding Lent. On the first day, mounted on their chargers and accompanied by many Venetian cavaliers, they went to salute the Doge, who showed himself at a window of the palace, surrounded by knights, officers of State, and dames. They entered the lists and presently a Venetian, a gentleman of the house of Tiepolo, appeared to challenge them and broke his spear with Giovanni d'Azzano. Then the Friulans charged each other with lance set



low in rest. In one of these encounters Tartaro della Frattina with his lance ripped open the lacing of Francesco de Sbroiavacca's helmet and carried it off his head, though Francesco kept his seat. On the second day a Venetian named Ugolino entered the lists and ran a joust with the Friulan cavaliers. Da Canal, in his picturesque and effective simplicity of style, thus continues the narrative: "Then on the third day one of the Friulan gentlemen set up his lance in the middle of the lists; the lance was short and thick and round; round it was wrapped a scroll which said 'Let any come who will to take my lance, for I am a nobly born youth, son of a cavalier, and any may joust with me as it listeth him; for I wait him mounted and armed in the lists.' Then there advanced a citizen of Venice, Belviso by name, born in Treviso; he took the lance, armed himself, mounted his horse, and passed inside the lists. He found the damoizelle of Friuli ready waiting him, and with him he ran many a joust, but neither fell, though they shivered their lances on each other's bodies. When this was over two Friulan damoizelles jousted together and broke their lances on each other, and passed on. What more? It was not long before the gentlemen of Venice who were on horseback began to shiver their lances one on another, and the Friulan cavaliers the same; so that great was the spectacle and marvellous, and much honour was shown to them of Friuli. Now all this happened in the presence of Monsignor the Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo, who with a noble company looked on from a window of his palace."<sup>1</sup>

Venetian skill and courage in the use of arms were verily remarkable. Petrarch declares that this nation of

<sup>1</sup> Da Canal, *Chr.*, cit., Part II, § CCCV et seq.





FORZE D'ERCOLE — from a wooden  
model in the Museo Civico



sailors was so skilful in the handling of horses and of weapons, so spirited and so hardy, that it surpassed all other warlike nations whether by sea or by land.<sup>1</sup> As time went on the magnificence of these martial exercises grew steadily greater. The Doge took his seat on the gallery over the great door of San Marco ; opposite him were the noble ladies in their tribune, the patricians, and the populace. The piazza was decked with pictures, banners, standards, and shields. The list was kept free of persons *ne homines recipiant sinistrum ab equis, et ut ludum melius facere possint*.<sup>2</sup> The champions were mounted on horses with resplendent trappings ; they wore mantles of gold and purple over their armour, which was of finest steel ; their helmets were of the most varied forms and the most precious workmanship, not only Venetian or Italian, but foreign, and especially German. The prizes were gold crowns set with gems or belts of finely wrought silver. Tourneys went on all down the middle ages ; one was fought on February 14, 1338, in honour of the conquest of Treviso. In 1364 Petrarch records his amazement at a tourney in honour of the recovery of Candia, at which he assisted sitting on the right hand of the Doge Lorenzo Celsi. The King of Cyprus broke a lance with Giacomo the son of Luchino dal Verme, commander-in-chief of the Venetian army. The capture of Padua in 1406 was also celebrated by a joust, and on the election of the Doge Tomaso Mocenigo (1413) seventy thousand persons were present at a joust given by the goldsmiths and jewellers ; four hundred and sixty cavaliers and a rich train of

<sup>1</sup> Petr., *Senil. ad Petrum Bononiensem*.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Lib. Fronesi* (1318-1325), p. 160, February 5, 1322. An order of June 17, 1367, forbade jousts, unless sanctioned by eight votes in the Council of Ten. Arch. di Stato, Cons. X, *Misti*, 1363-1374.



servants accompanied the Marquises of Mantua and Ferrara, who figured among the champions. An old chronicler gives us an account of a joust held in honour of the marriage of Jacopo Foscari, son of the Doge, in 1441: "El serenissimo Principe Messer Francesco Foscari per honorar le noze de suo fiol Messer Jacomo adi 8 Feurer 1440 (m. v.) el fese far una bella giostra su la piazza de Messer San Marco, e messe per priesio una zorneda de ueludo cremisino piena de argento e fo zostradori 40 et il Conte Francesco Sforza fo gouernador e fo datto il priesio a uno de la Compagnia del ditto Conte Francesco et a uno della Compagnia de gatta Melada e a uno della Compagnia de ser Tadio marchese (d'Este) e tra de loro se acordo."<sup>1</sup> In 1458 jousts were run by the captains of Bartolomeo Collesin in the piazza, and in 1463 another tourney, also held in the piazza, was won by Bertoldo d'Este.

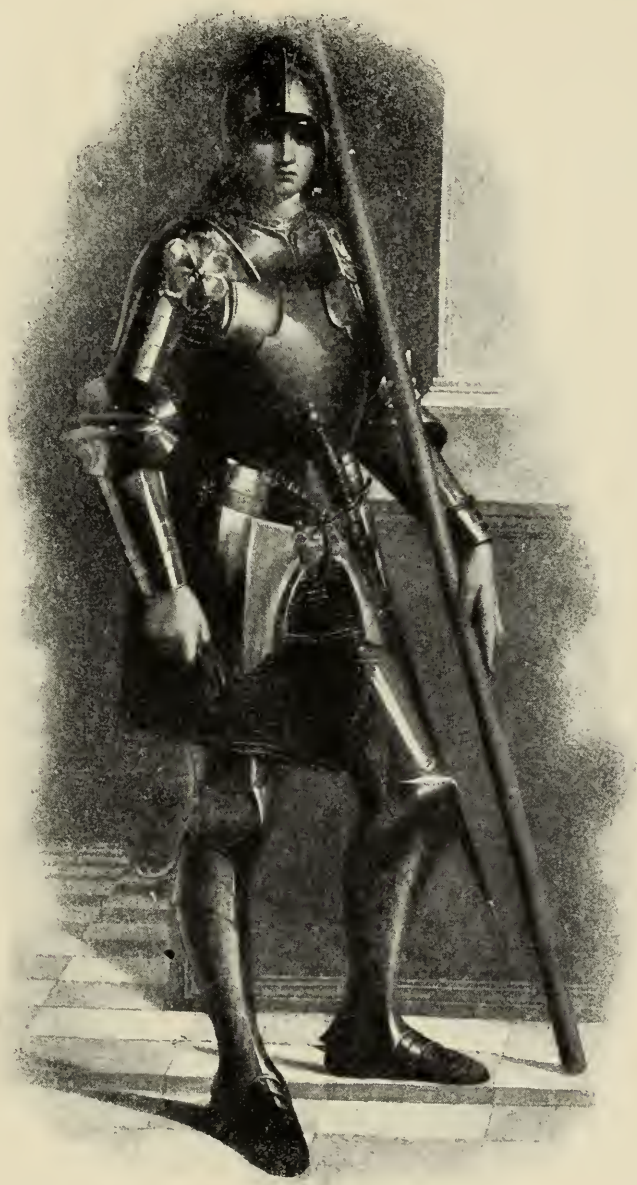
Other martial sports were tilting at the ring (*decur-sioni*), sham seafights, sham assaults on fortresses, and *bagordi* or evolutions on horseback in which the companies after advancing to the attack scattered again to recompose themselves in regiments or companies.

The excellence of Venetian law, the fortune of her arms, and the success of her trade raised her people to a high pitch of courage and prosperity, and the public spectacles of dexterity and courage helped to feed the patriotism and the confidence of the populace.

Side by side with these displays of physical strength we find *fêtes* of religious or civic pomp, or commemorations of episodes in the national history. From the earliest times there was a lively interest in religious festivals, and the ceremonies of the Church lent splendour to civic functions, so that it is not easy to distinguish

<sup>1</sup> Trevisan, cit., fol. cccxxi

U. Y. Stone  
Twisting. Libani



GIORGIONE—San Liberale—detail of a picture by Castelfranco





one from the other. The chief religious festivals were the Purification, the Conception, the Birth and the Assumption of the Virgin; the four festivals of Saint Mark, namely, his passion, his translation from Alexandria, his apparition and the dedication of the basilica; Christmas, Santo Stefano, Saint John the Evangelist, the Circumcision, Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, All Saints, Saint Luke, Saint Lawrence, Saint Michael, Saint Martin, and Saint Nicholas. The festival for the election of a Doge was, in early times, surrounded by religious ceremony, as we may gather from the account left us by the clerk Domenico Tino, who was present at the election of Domenico Selvo in 1071.<sup>1</sup> He tells us that a great crowd of people gathered on the shore of the island of Olivolo while the bishops, priests, and monks raised prayers in the church of San Pietro di Castello; when by popular acclaim Selvo was declared Doge, he was raised on the shoulders of some of the leading citizens and carried down to a boat which set out for Saint Mark's. No sooner was he in the boat than Selvo removed his stockings so that he might enter the basilica with all humility; the whole company chanted the *Te Deum* and the *Kyrie eleison*, while all the bells rang out. The Doge was met at the church door by the clergy and entered the fane barefooted; he laid himself prostrate on the ground, and then took from the altar the staff of office and passed into the Ducal Palace, where his first step was to order the repair of *januas et sedilia, tabulataque et cenacula*, which, according to the rude custom of the time, had all been broken by the mob as a demonstration of joy.

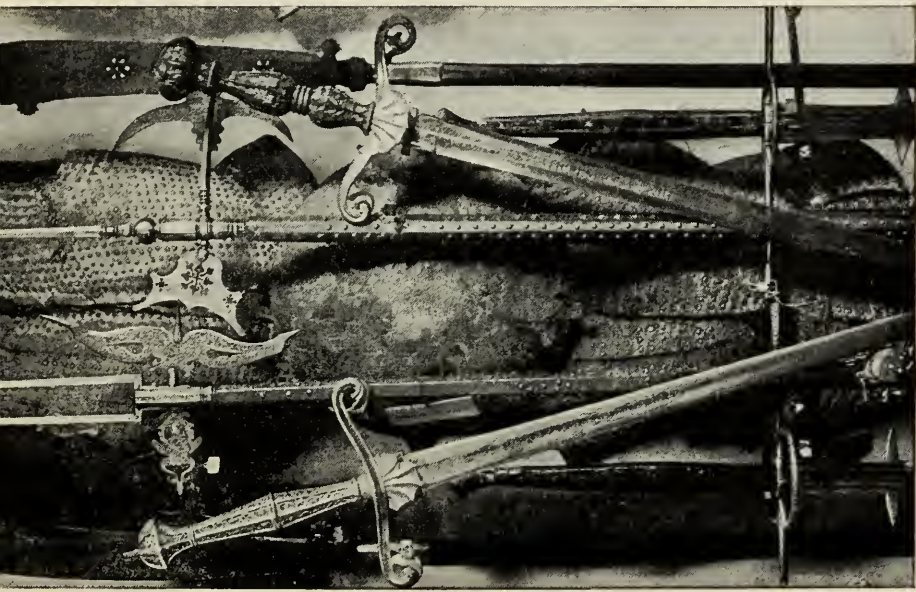
The more ancient civil festivals were established to commemorate some triumph of Venetian arms, the defeat

<sup>1</sup> Gallicciolli, Vol. II, p. 1930.

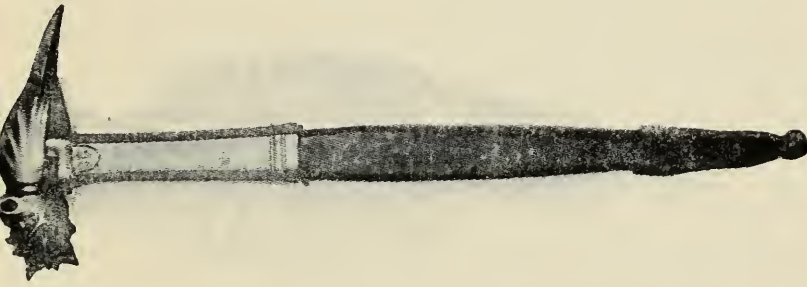
of the Lombards at Ravenna, the repulse of the Magyars by the Doge Tribuno, and Enrico Dandolo's capture of Constantinople. Legend has preserved for us the story of a memorable fight, unconfirmed by any evidence, however, which gave rise to one of the most singular of Venetian festivals, the *Festa delle Marie*. In the reign of Pietro Tradonico (836-864) according to some, of Pietro Partecipazio (939-942) or of Pietro Candiano (942-959) according to others, the Dalmatian pirates who infested the Adriatic landed secretly at Olivolo on the last day of January, burst into the cathedral, where they were as usual on that day celebrating the marriages of the young couples, and carried off maidens and dowers together. They set their sails for Caorle and put in at a port called in commemoration the *porto delle Donzelle*, and there began to divide the spoil. But the Venetians, after recovering from their first alarm, manned their boats and headed by the Doge came up with the pirates at Caorle, attacked and defeated them, and recovered the brides and the booty. It may be that this legend, embroidered by popular phantasy, refers to the slaughter of the famous Istrian pirate Gajolo, who for long was wont to hale Venetian men and women into slavery.<sup>1</sup>

The defeat of the Istrian pirates was celebrated on the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, and was repeated each year. The festival lasted several days and was so splendid as to draw a large number of strangers into the city. Twelve of the fairest maids of Venice were chosen and dressed most sumptuously by the patri-

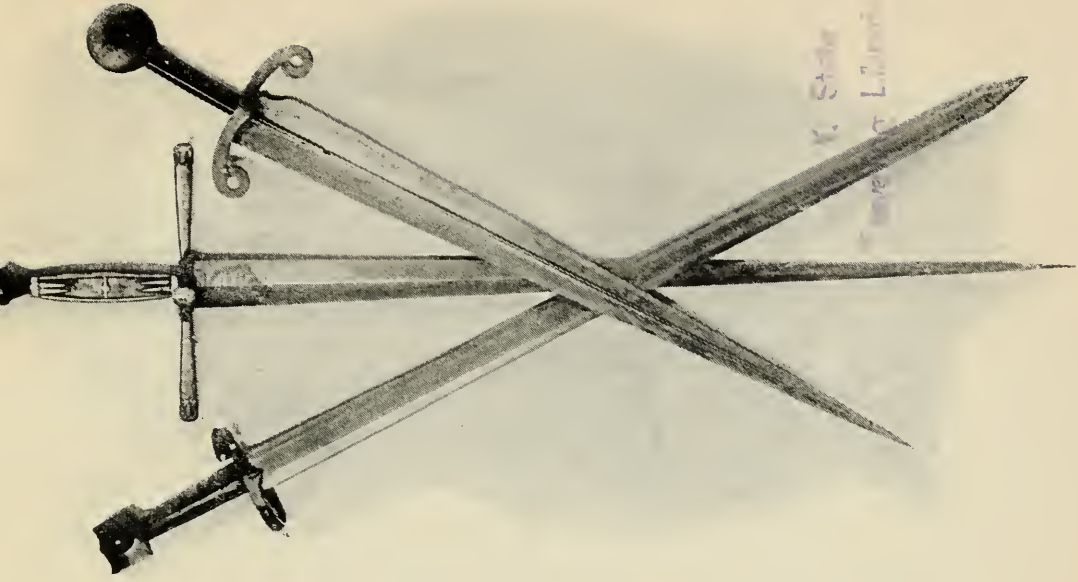
<sup>1</sup> "Vir quidam improbitatis permaxime Gaiolus nomine in ystriana provincia esurexit." (*Cronaca di Marco*, *Arch. Stor. It.*, Ser. I, T. VIII, p. 265.) See also Zon, notes on the *Cronaca di Martino da Canal* (*ibid.*, p. 743).



(A)



(B)



(C)

A—Arms of the Dogi Francesco Foscari and Cristoforo Moro. (Arsenal of Venice.) B—Battle-axe (XIV century). (Museo Civico.) C—Venetian Swords (XV century). (Arsenal of Venice)





cian families of the quarter to which they belonged<sup>1</sup>; they then went by boat to San Pietro, where the bishop came out to bless them; they then returned to Saint Mark's and heard Mass, and then, preceded by the Doge, they went in procession up the Grand Canal as far as Rialto; then turning into the Rio del Fondaco dei Tedeschi, they came to Santa Maria Formosa, where a solemn service was held. Tradition says that the guild of cofferers took the largest part in the victory and asked for no other reward for their valour than that the Doge, on the *fête* of the *Marie*, should visit the church of Santa Maria Formosa, which was their parish church. The Doge, joking with the frank simplicity of those times, said, "But what if it is raining, or what if I am athirst?" And the cofferers at once replied, "We'll give you hats for your heads, and drink to quench your thirst." The bargain was kept on both sides, and as long as the Republic lasted not a single year passed without the procession of the Doge to Santa Maria Formosa, where he was met by the parish priest, who presented him with gilded straw hats, flasks of Malmsey, and oranges.<sup>2</sup> Both Martino da Canal and the Friulan notary and poet, Pace, born at Gemona after the middle of the thirteenth century, have described the *fête*, the first in his chronicle, the second in an elegiac Latin poem.<sup>3</sup> They talk of the sumptuous trappings, the merry crowd, the resplendent

<sup>1</sup> A decree of the *Maggior Consiglio*, January 29, 1303, even went so far as to allow the jewels of the treasury of San Marco to be employed to adorn the maids. See Tassini, *Feste, Spettacoli*, etc., p. 6. Venezia, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Renier-Michiel, *Origine delle Feste Veneziane*, p. 99. Milano, 1829.

<sup>3</sup> Pace de Foroiulio, *Descr. festi gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae ad hon. Ill. Ducis Venetorum domini Petri Gradonico*. Pace's poem was first printed by Flaminio Corner and then by Cicogna in 1843.

dresses of the women, the aspect of the Grand Canal. Sometimes twelve wooden figures took the place of the twelve maids, until 1379, when, during the dark days of the war of Chioggia, the festival was abandoned and never restored; the only record remaining being, as we have observed, the annual procession of the Doge to Santa Maria Formosa.

On the other hand the splendid ceremony of Ascension Day continued down to the fall of the Republic. After Pietro Orseolo's successes in Dalmatia, in 1000, it was decreed that on Ascension Day the Doge, followed by the clergy and the people, should go to the *lido* to assist at the benediction of the Adriatic. On the same day they also commemorated the solemn investiture of the sea, which some erroneously suppose to have been conferred on the Republic by Pope Alexander III when he took refuge in Venice at the time of his quarrel with Frederick Barbarossa. The legendary origin of the festival, which is connected with the mythical battle of Salvore, is thus related by an ancient chronicle: "Misser lo Doxe monta in galia con la grandezza di Venesia, et fo solamente trenta galie si come ho detto, e partisse, et quando ello fo cinquanta meia in mar fo encontradi en le settantacinque galie, de lo fio dello Imperador, et lo missier lo Doxe con la bona zente, che ello haveva nella soa compagna, conseasse da tuor la battaglia. Et conseiando, andò a ferir en la bona ventura, et sconfisse le galie de l'Imperador, et fu preso lo fio Otthon dello Imperador, lo quale era capitano, et menallo in carcere, et habbuda victoria Venesia, et zonti a casa, missier lo Papa andò con le brazzia averte contra di missier lo Doxe, et rezavando la sua grandezza digando: ben venga lo signior di tutto lo mar salso, imper quello chello la ben



conquistado ; et qua missier lo Papa si le presenta un anello d'oro digando che lo sposasse lo mar sì come l'homo sposa la dona per esser lo signor.<sup>1</sup> Et questo nu concedemo perpetualmente da fare ogni anno."<sup>2</sup> We will also quote the following description, which seems remarkable. It is given by an anonymous Milanese of the fifteenth century, and the characters come to life again in the quaint language of the age. "Io vidi el Buzimtoro parato de zandalle . . . cremesino, el quale era tirato dece remorzi ed a chaduno remorzi aveva due omini. In questo Buzimtoro era il Duxe, vegio de anni LXX, grande et de bono aspeto vestito da pano doro cremesino rizo, la veste longa tanto che due scuderi lo aiutano a portar dicta veste, la bireta de zetonino rosso cum uno frisso doro a circho. Et cosi stava asetato in mezo del veschovo de Riete et de l'arcivescovo de Spallatro. . . . Et qui andaro a li dui castelli, et lo Duxe sposò lo mare a hore XV, d'uno anello de precio di sei ducati. Et poi ritornò indietro et veneno audire la messa a Santo Nicollò de Lio. . . . La messa fu cellebrata cum cantori . . . assai boni per quei pochi sono ; et sonò lorgano le cerimonie del Duxe quando se cantò la lectione, et el Duxe tenete uno candelere cum una torcia bianca in cima apizata. Sollo in pede niuno non gli fece compagnia. Et poi si cantò lectione, el Duxe tenete uno candelere cum vangelo e fenito se portò lo libro a basare al Duxe, e poi per ordine ali

<sup>1</sup> "Ut vir habet sponsam," as a poet of Bassano sings in the thirteenth century in a poem on the peace of Venice concluded between Pope Alexander and Barbarossa. Castellani Bassaniensis, *Venetianae pacis inter ecclesiam et imperium*, ed. Att. Hortis (*Archeografo Triestino*, Vol. XV, 1889).

<sup>2</sup> See *Leggenda volgare della Venuta di Alessandro III a Venezia*, preserved in *Liber Pactorum*, I, and printed by Girolamo Bardi, *Della vittoria navale ottenuta dalla Repubblica Veneta contro Othone figliuolo di Federigo I imp.*, p. 153. Venetia, 1581.

altri ambasciatori. Dapoi vene il tempo de la oferta, et quello che cantava la messa andò al Duxe, el quale Duxe offerse uno certo dinaro che teneva legato dal cavo del fazoletto. Era uno trono o vero uno ducato, poi stete poco che se alzò el corpo de Cristo. Li boni contenti cum devotione, quelli contrari Dio li perdona. Da poi se donò la pace et poi se finite la messa. . . . Viti montare in Buzintoro la Signoria del Duxe et altre persone . . . et poi guinsono a Vinegia ; el Duxe fece uno disnare a la compagnia ; io non gli intrai, che non me parse andare senza carico de presumptione et per questo restai. Ma essendo in Santo Marcho al vespero uno zentilhomo venetiano, el qual me vene a sentar a presso, me disse como lui aveva disnato cum li Duxe et ch' el disnare era stato sumptuoso et richo." <sup>1</sup>

Every year the Doge went on board the Bucintoro, and when he came in sight of the sea he flung into it a consecrated ring, pronouncing the words, *Desponsamus te mare in signum veri perpetuique dominî*. The first Bucintoro was built by order of the Senate in 1311, but the name is found as early as 1293 in a law which speaks of the Doge's state barge.<sup>2</sup> The word, however, also is applied to a transport or a merchant ship ; for we find in another law, of September 27, 1355, the following words : *Quod nostre galee et buzentauri in reditu suo levent de omni parte mercatores et mercationes*.<sup>3</sup> As to the etymology of the word, some, among whom are Francesco Sansovino and Boerio, urge that it is to be found in the decree of 1311, which orders *Quod fabricetur navilium ducento-*

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato di Milano, *Cart. Dipl., Venetiis, die XXIII, 1476, Mag. Ill. et ex. principi Domino duci Mediolani*.

<sup>2</sup> Zanetti, G., *Origine di alcune arti*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Misti*, reg. 27, p. 32.





*Il Doge di Venetia con tutta la sig.<sup>a</sup> il giorno dell'Ascensione à spoiare il Mare con questa solennità la quale  
et per dignità et per concerto e la più bella pompa che si uegga in Venetia*

THE Marriage of the Sea — from  
the "Customs" of Franco



Mammy  
Thursday

*rum hominum.* *Bucentoro*, they say, is a corruption of this *ducentorum*. Others derive the name from *bucine*, the instruments that were played during the ceremonies. Gallicciolli and Casoni agree with Cristoforo da Canal, who derives the name from the ship *Centaurus*, mentioned by Virgil, with the addition of the Greek syllable *βov*, which is frequently used to express the idea of great size. The opinion of Zon<sup>1</sup> and of Guglielmotti is, however, the least improbable; they derive the word from the sort of ship called a *bucio* or *buzo*, whence *bucio in oro*.

Maundy Thursday was kept in commemoration of the victory of Venice over Ulric, Patriarch of Aquileia. In 1053, with a view to putting an end to the fierce struggles for supremacy between the rival sees of Aquileia and Grado, it was settled that Grado should henceforth be recognised as the chief see and the metropolis of Venice and of Istria, while the Patriarch of Aquileia should content himself with superiority over the mainland sees. But wrath was not to be appeased. In 1164 Ulric, Patriarch of Aquileia, mustered a strong band of Friulans and made a sudden raid on Grado, which he occupied.<sup>2</sup> The Venetians promptly manned a fleet, and under the orders of their Doge, Vitale II Michiel, they recovered Grado and brought to Venice the patriarch and twelve of his chapter, as well as many Friulan barons. At the request of the Pope they were all set at liberty, but the patriarch was bound to send each year to Venice, on Maundy Thursday, twelve porkers and twelve loaves. After 1312 a bull was also added to the original tribute, all of which was intended in mockery of the patriarch

<sup>1</sup> Note 146 to the *Cron. di Martino da Canal*. Guglielmotti, *St. della Marina Pontificia*. Firenze, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> Da Canal, *Cron.*, pp. 314-316.

and his canons.<sup>1</sup> Every Maundy Thursday, in the piazza of San Marco, mid the rejoicings of the people and the blaze of fireworks, in broad-day light, the bull was killed and the pigs stuck, and the flesh was distributed among the prisoners in jail. Inside the palace, in the chambers of Signori di Notte and of the Piovego, they erected little toy castles of wood, symbolising the fortresses of Friuli, which the Doge and his councillors broke to pieces with a rod of iron.

All these public festivals, too numerous to rehearse at length, were, in fact, the expression of the times, in which the wealth acquired by trade was lavished on the quarter, its palaces and its churches, and abundance, safety, and freedom made the populace happy. The rapid accumulation of wealth led to the growth of splendour which corresponded to the aspirations of a people enamoured of every kind of amusement and diversion. As early as the tenth century, during the days before Lent, the last of which was declared by the Senate in 1296 to be a public holiday,<sup>2</sup> the populace gave itself up to riotous amusement. It was such revelries as these, coupled, perhaps, with the traditions of the *baccanalia* and *lupercali* inherited from Roman times, that gave rise to the Carnival, of which we find a notice in 1094 in a document of Vitale Faliero.<sup>3</sup> According to some authorities the use of the mask dates

<sup>1</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Dogi*, ed. Monticolo, p. 257, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, Lib. X.

<sup>3</sup> In this document, which is cited by Dandolo in his *Cronaca*, we read, "Dare nobis . . . debeat pullos tres et denarios per annum, unum scilicet ad Nativitatem Dominicam cum denario suo, alterum ad *carnis Laxationem* cum denario suo, tertium vero in Pascha cum denario suo." *Carnevale* probably in origin referred to the night before Lent, when one said farewell to the flesh (*carnem laxare, lasciare la carne*, hence *carnesciale*); others hold that the word is derived from *carne* and *scialare*. Muratori, *Antiq. Ital.*, Diss. LXII.





The celebration of Maundy Thursday—  
from the “Customs” of Franco

Masks  
Numbers  
Painter



from the conquest of the Levant, and we find the earliest mention of masks in a law of 1268 which forbids masqueraders to throw eggs. Another law of 1339, forbidding masqueraders to mask *per modum inhonestum*, is followed by a series of regulations; for example, that masqueraders may not enter a church or a convent, because they were sometimes guilty of *multas inhonestates* and used *verba turpissima*, that they were not to go about *depeniti*, *ne cum barba ne cavelli posticci* on days prohibited by law and under severe penalties.<sup>1</sup> But so strong was the desire to wear the mask (*volto*) in seasons when the law allowed, that the trade of mask-making flourished to such an extent that the mask-makers formed one special branch of the guild of painters. And closely allied with this tendency there came into being clubs founded for purpose of pleasure which, in a way, recall the *brigata spendereccia* of Siena.<sup>2</sup>

These public festivals had no small influence in preserving internal quiet. For example, the Doge Pietro Gradenigo, at the moment when the populace was being excluded from participation in the government by the Serrata del Maggior Consiglio, gave sumptuous banquets to the sailor-folk and took pains to mix freely in the crowd,<sup>3</sup> and thus succeeded in averting agitation till little by little the populace forgot its lost liberties. Sumptuous living, combined with condescension on the part of the great, has always been in favour with the mob. The popular cry on the election of a Doge drowned the murmurs of the malcontents. The

<sup>1</sup> Mutinelli, *Lessico Veneto*, s. v. *maschere*. Urbani de Gheltot, *Le maschere in Venezia*. Venezia, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> *Inferno*, XXIX, 121-132.

<sup>3</sup> *Governo dello Stato Veneto*, MS. della Bibl. di Monsieur, cit. by Daru, *St.*, T. I, p. 71.



simple ceremony described by Tino, at the election of Doge Selvo, was gradually changed through the next three centuries till we come to the magnificent function recorded by Andrea Marini,<sup>1</sup> at one time secretary to Giangaleazzo Visconti and later, about the close of the fourteenth century, in the service of the Republic. In all probability Marini was present at the election of Michele Steno (1400), and his narrative shows his marvel at the splendour of the ceremony. The people rushed to the palace of the newly elected Doge; there some began to plunder the house, others hoisted the Doge on their shoulders and bore him to San Marco. The rejoicings lasted many days,—banquets to the guilds, processions on the piazza, church functions in the basilica, sports and dances for the people. And it was then that a number of young patricians and citizens formed themselves into various clubs for purposes of amusement, all of which took the general name of “The Hose” (*della calza*), from the badges which each of them bore embroidered in colours, in gold and silver, in pearls and gems, upon their tight-fitting hose. Foreigners were admitted to these clubs and even women—who were called *compagne*, and bore the club badge on a sleeve of their gowns. The various clubs, each of which had its distinctive badge and costume, took various names, such as the Immortali, Reali, Sempre-vivi, Perpetui, Eterni, Pavoni, Ortolani, Giardinieri, Felici, Principali, Liberali, Sbragazai, Fraternali, Potenti, Fausti, Accesi, Cortesi, Floridi, Beati, and so on. Each club elected its chief, called the prior, who in public wore a uniform of cloth-of-gold, two councillors, a treasurer, a chaplain, a secretary, a notary, a painter,

<sup>1</sup> Marini, *De pompa ducatus Venetorum*, published by Dr. A. Segarizzi. Venezia, 1903.

an architect and a poet. These young men in their picturesque costumes gave to the city a note of elegance and gaiety.

At the election of Francesco Foscari (1423) the city was *en fête* for a whole year, at the close of which Foscari brought the Dogaressa to the Ducal Palace. For the marriage of Foscari's son Jacopo with Lucrezia Contarini in 1441, the most dazzling display of magnificence was made. The bride, with the members of both families and with sixty dames of honour, was brought in richly decorated barges to the Ducal Palace, where a ball took place. At the conclusion of the wedding ceremony the bride was solemnly escorted home. Eighteen young gentlemen, members of "The Hose," met in the house of Eustacchio Balbi, their prior. Two of the Contarini family, writing to a brother in Constantinople, have left us a description of their costumes:

"Avevimo in piè la calza della campagna, in dosso tutti zepponi de Alessandrin broccà d'argento, e veste de velludo cremesin con le maneghe arlotti (slashed sleeves), fodrà de dossi, con centure cremesine, e in capo barrette tente in grana grande alla Sforzesca, e tutti aveva famegi do per uno con la zorneda a quartieri, con la nostra divisa, e altri quattro famegi con le calze della divisa; e tutti un corsier per uno, coverti tutti de velludo verde, tutte ponte de arzento, chi una cosa e chi un' altra. . . ." They mounted their splendid chargers, all draped in richest housings, and with the bridegroom, his servants in silk liveries, and soldiers, in all two hundred and fifty horsemen, preceded and followed by fifes and drums, they set out for San Samuele; there on a bridge of boats they crossed the Grand Canal to San Barnaba, where the bride lived. She, in her robes all

studded with gold and jewels, and accompanied by two procurators of San Marco and a suite of sixty dames, passed into the church of San Barnaba, heard Mass, and returned home. The young gallants of "The Hose" then scattered about the town, welcomed by the cries of the people and the flutter of banners and pennants, until evening, when they all gathered again at the Ducal Palace. There one hundred and fifty noble dames, all most sumptuously dressed, went on board the Bucintoro and were taken to San Barnaba, to bring the bride home to the Ducal Palace, where she was met by the Doge and the Dogaressa and their court, all in gala dress. The courtyard of the palace was ablaze with the costumes of pages and their young masters, all of the most varied and graceful design. The rejoicings lasted some days longer<sup>1</sup>; the members of "The Hose" still caracolled about the streets, tourneys took place in the piazzas, banquets and balls in the palace, regattas and serenatas on the water.

Venice became more and more the goal of all persons of distinction, of every one who was in search of splendour and of beauty. The old chronicles show us a procession of kings and princes flocking to Venice to be received with all the sumptuousness of her boundless hospitality.<sup>2</sup> To cite but a few examples: Amadeo IV, of Savoy, called the Conte Verde, in 1366 was amazed at

<sup>1</sup> Morelli, *Solennità e pompe nuziali* (see *Operette*, Vol. I, p. 139).

<sup>2</sup> In the fourteenth century Venice numbered among her guests Pietro Lusignan, King of Cyprus (1362); the Emperor Charles IV (1367); Valenza di Bernabò Visconti (1378); Alberto, Lord of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio (1388); Francesco Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1389); Albert, Archduke of Austria (1398). The fifteenth century gives us the following royal and princely guests: the son of the Duke of Burgundy, nephew of the King of France (1401); Emanuele, Emperor of Constantinople (1403); Nicolò, Marquis of Ferrara (1405); the eldest son of the King of Portugal (1405); the wife of Obizzo da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna (1412); James,



the magnificence of Venice, which even then had begun to be famous throughout the world for the singularity of its manners and customs ; and Peter, son of the King of Portugal, was the guest of the Republic in 1428 and was present at a great ball given by the members of "The Hose," where one hundred and twenty noble ladies appeared in robes of cloth-of-gold sown with pearls and gems, while another hundred and thirty were in crimson silk, likewise powdered with jewels. *Parveli una magna cosa*,<sup>1</sup> says the chronicler. In April, 1442, Francesco Sforza and Bianca Visconti, his wife, to whom the Republic made a present of six hundred ducats,<sup>2</sup> came to Venice. The Doge and Dogaressa went on board the Bucintoro to meet the lords of Milan. The ducal suite comprised two hundred dames, all robed in cloth-of-gold and blazing with jewels. The Emperor John Paleologus, invited by Pope Eugenius IV to the Council of Ferrara (1437) for the reconciliation of the Greek and Latin churches, entered Venice in triumph, after being received at the *lido* by the Doge, and spent eighteen days in the city. The last German emperor to be crowned at Rome, Frederic III, arrived at Venice on the 21st of May, 1452, and after four days was joined by his wife, Eleanore of Portugal. The law against the use of cloth-of-gold robes by ladies was sus-

son of the King of Aragon (1414) ; the Archbishop of Westminster, uncle of Henry V of England (1418) ; Calogiani, Emperor of Constantinople (1423) ; Otho, Duke of Bavaria (1423) ; Peter, son of the King of Portugal (1428) ; John Paleologus, Emperor of Constantinople (1437) ; Frederic, Archduke of Austria (1440) ; Francesco Sforza and his wife Bianca (1442) ; the Emperor Frederic III (1452 and 1468) ; Beatrice, daughter of Ferdinand, King of Naples (1475), and so on.

<sup>1</sup> Filiasi, op. cit., T. VII.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. di Stato, Senato, *Secreta*, n. 15, p. 118, V°.

pended, and the Dogaressa with two hundred dames, all dressed in cloth-of-gold and adorned with gems, went on the Bucintoro, which was also draped in gold cloth, to meet the youthful empress, only fifteen years of age. "Fo si eccellente triumpho," writes a chronicler, "che non se pol scriver cum pena et supera li triumpho romani."<sup>1</sup> Two hundred and fifty ladies attended the reception given in honour of the empress, who received a present of a coverlid of crimson damask, sown with pearls and jewels, for the cradle of her expected child, and a golden crown worth twenty-six hundred ducats.<sup>2</sup> Frederic III returned to the lagoons in 1468 and met with another magnificent reception. He came by way of Chioggia, and the procurators of San Marco and thirteen senators awaited him at San Clemente, where he passed the night. The following day the Doge came out to meet the emperor, and *post mutuos amplexus* they went on board the Bucintoro, where the emperor took his seat in *cathedra honore disposita*. The golden vessel was followed by triremes, biremes, flat-bottomed boats, galleys, *et alii navigi ornatu regio admirabili*. The bells of San Marco rang joyfully, and the people flocked into the streets to the sound of trumpets and all kinds of instruments. Mourning was forbidden during the emperor's stay. In San Marco, on the right of the high altar, a golden throne, two steps higher than the Doge's, was set up. In the Sala del Maggior Consiglio a banquet was given, at which the emperor assisted. As long as he remained in Venice the emperor dressed in black, except on the day of his entry, when he

<sup>1</sup> Dolfin, *Cronaca*, c. 310 (Bibl. Marciana, Cl. VII, Cod. DCCXLVIII).

<sup>2</sup> Sanudo, *Vite dei Dogi*, col. 1143.

wore the precious golden mantle given him by Pope Paul II.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the midst of such pomp and pageantry the festivals and ceremonies of the middle ages rapidly assumed a new appearance and a new character.

<sup>1</sup> Arch. di Stato, *Cerimoniali*, n. 1, c. XIV.

END OF PART I, VOLUME I







# DATE DUE

JAN 13 1989

NOV 19 1988

NOV 19 1989

NOV 19 1989

DEC 07 1994

NOV 14 1990

MAR 21 1995

15 1994

DEC 13 1990

DEC 10 1990

MAR 10 1995

MAR 18 1998

FEB 18 1994

FEB 25 1994

MAR 11 1994

MAR 12 1994

APR 18 1994

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